



MANPOWER AND  
RESERVE AFFAIRS

## OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1500 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-1500

March 10, 2025

House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness  
Representative Lisa Marten, Chair  
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

House Committee on Public Safety  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

### **RE: Senate Bill 951 SD2 (Relating to Child Protection)**

Dear Chairs Marten and Belatti, Vice Chairs Olds and Iwamoto, and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of the United States Department of Defense (DOD) and military families stationed in Hawai'i, I am writing to express strong support for the policy changes provided within SB 951 SD 2. Currently, 35 states have enacted this policy and four states, including Hawai'i, have introduced bills this year to address this issue. This policy measure is particularly critical to DOD with nearly 26,000 minor children of over 42,000 active-duty military members stationed and living in Hawai'i.

DOD is required to establish the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) to address prevention of, and response to child abuse and neglect cases involving children in military families.<sup>1</sup> All major military installation FAPs offer wrap-around support for families at risk with a focus on prevention<sup>2</sup>:

- New Parent Support mentoring and training
- Relationship/Marriage counseling, Anger/conflict management, and Family Resiliency workshops
- Military One Source/Military Family Life Counselors: Non-medical Counseling
- Clinical Intervention including counseling and/or treatment
- Victim Advocacy for victims of domestic abuse and non-offending parents of child abuse or neglect victims

Federal law also requires all DOD covered professionals who are mandated reporters to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to military officials and FAP personnel, and to local authorities and child welfare services (CWS) offices, but with many active-duty military families living in communities located outside of military installations, combined by their frequent moves, incidences of child abuse and/or neglect may remain unknown to the military.

Each Military Service component has established policies to implement DOD policy directives on the response to child abuse and neglect, requiring that installation commands, military law enforcement, and the FAP coordinate with each other and with state and local CWS agencies and law enforcement, including requesting reciprocity of information-sharing requirements regarding instances of alleged child abuse or neglect involving members of the military<sup>3</sup>. Currently, there is no requirement for State and local

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Federal Regulations Title 32, Subtitle A, Chapter 1, Subchapter D, Part 61, "Family Advocacy Program (FAP),"

<sup>2</sup> DoD Instruction 6400.01 "Family Advocacy Program (FAP),"

<sup>3</sup> 10 U.S. Code 1787 "Reporting of child abuse,"

CWS offices to notify military officials of allegations of child abuse and/or neglect or when an investigation involving a military family is being conducted; consequently, military families who are at-risk may not receive critical preventative and rehabilitative services that can be provided by the FAP during all stages of ongoing investigations.

The policy proposed within SB 951 SD 2, if approved, would codify a reciprocal State requirement that will support the statutory responsibility of the military service components to report allegations of child abuse and neglect to the State, increase military families' access to prevention services, and facilitate better coordination of available state child welfare services and military preventative and rehabilitative services in support of military children and families. We have been in ongoing discussions with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Deputy Attorney General (AG) to address potential implications of the measure and are satisfied that our collaboration has resulted in the current language that incorporates our respective requirements. We are committed to continued coordination with DHS and the AG's office to develop specific guidance on mutual policies, procedures, and responsibilities to ensure smooth implementation of the policy proposal.

The Department truly appreciates Hawaii's steadfast support of our military service members and their families. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and to the bill sponsors for their support of this important policy measure.

Sincerely,

Kelli May Douglas  
Pacific and Southwest Regional Liaison  
Defense-State Liaison Office

**SB-951-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 11:37:14 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/12/2025 8:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Chiarantona	Department of Defense	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

The Department of Defense stands on its written testimony and I am available as a subject matter expert for more in-depth questions about the Family Advocacy Program and our Coordinated Community Response approach to addressing this important issue.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY**

Wednesday March 12, 2025, at 8:50 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

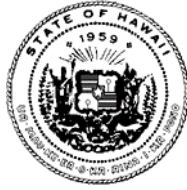
In consideration of  
**SB 951 SD2**  
**RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION**

Chairs Marten and Belatti, Vice Chairs Olds and Iwamoto, and Members of the Committees: The Military and Community Relations Office of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports SB 951 SD2 which requires mandatory reports of child abuse or neglect to include the military status of the child's parent or guardian, if known; requires the Department of Human Services to make efforts to determine the military status of a person implicated in child abuse or neglect and to inform the appropriate Department of Defense family advocacy program of an open investigation of a member of the United States military; requires the Director of Human Services to amend or adopt rules, to authorize the disclosure to Department of Defense family advocacy programs any allegations of child and abuse or neglect involving a member of the United States military.

SB951 SD2 aims to address a critical gap in child protection for military families. The policy proposed within SB951 SD2, if approved, would codify a reciprocal State requirement to support the statutory responsibility of the military service components to report allegations of child abuse and neglect to the State, increase military families' access to prevention services, and facilitate better coordination of available state child welfare services and military preventative and rehabilitative services in support of military children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
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TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 10, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
House Committee on Public Safety

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 951 SD2 – RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION.**

Hearing: March 12, 2025, 8:50 a.m.  
Conference Room 329 & Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and respectfully requests that the Revisor make recommendations that reconcile these proposed amendments with Act 147, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, and avoid renumbering the paragraphs of section 350-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes. DHS additionally requests an extended effective date of this measure as DHS, the Department of the Attorney General, and the Department of Defense continue to work on Memorandum of Understanding with each of the branches of the military and to give DHS time to train its staff.

**PURPOSE:** Requires mandatory reports of child abuse or neglect to include the military status of the child's parent or guardian, if known. Requires the Department of Human Services to inform the appropriate authority of the United States military when, upon receiving a report of child abuse or neglect, there is sufficient information to determine that the report involves a

family where one of the parents, guardians, or alleged perpetrators is a member of an identifiable branch of the United States military. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD2)0F0F

DHS appreciates the Committees on Health and Human Services and Public Safety and Military Affairs amendments:

- (1) Deleting language that would have defined "director" to mean the Director of Human Services;
- (2) Clarifying that upon receiving a report of child abuse or neglect, if there is sufficient information to determine that the report involves a family where one of the parents, guardians, or alleged perpetrators is a member of an identifiable branch of the United States military, the Department of Human Services shall inform the appropriate authority for that branch of the military;
- (3) Deleting language that would have required the Director of Human Services to adopt or amend rules to authorize the disclosure to Department of Defense family advocacy groups any reported instances of child abuse or neglect involving a member of the United States military, as the Department of Human Services administrative rules already provide this authority;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The Committee on Judiciary amended the measure by making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 951 SD2  
Relating to Child Protection**

Committee on Human Services & Homelessness  
Representative Lisa Marten, Chair  
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

Committee on Public Safety  
Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 8:50 AM  
Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

Aloha Chairs Marten and Belatti, Vice Chairs Olds and Iwamoto, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") supports SB 951 SD2 which requires mandatory reports of child abuse or neglect to include the military status of the child's parent or guardian, if known; requires the Department of Human Services to make efforts to determine the military status of a person implicated in child abuse or neglect and to inform the appropriate Department of Defense family advocacy program of an open investigation of a member of the United States military; requires the Director of Human Services to amend or adopt rules, to authorize the disclosure to Department of Defense family advocacy programs any allegations of child and abuse or neglect involving a member of the United States military.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

SB 951 SD2 aims to address a critical gap in child protection for military families. While federal law requires Department of Defense personnel to report suspected child abuse or neglect to both military and local authorities, there is no reciprocal requirement for state and local child welfare services to notify military officials of such cases involving military families. This gap can result in at-risk military families missing out on crucial preventative and rehabilitative services



offered by the Family Advocacy Program (FAP). This measure would establish a reciprocal information sharing requirement, enhancing coordination between state child welfare services and military support systems, ultimately improving access to prevention and rehabilitation services for military children and families.

This approach has already been adopted by 35 states, with Hawaii and others currently considering similar legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support.



**SB-951-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 8:29:31 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/12/2025 8:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Mae Buscemi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will help to:

- Prevent abuse
- Encourage early identification and prompt reporting
- Promote victim safety and empowerment
- Provide appropriate availability of treatment for affected service members and their families by alerting the proper authorities.

**SB-951-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 11:48:37 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/12/2025 8:50:00 AM

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

Comments:

Stand in Support

**SB-951-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:07:28 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/12/2025 8:50:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this bill

**SB-951-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:31:00 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/12/2025 8:50:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB951.SD2 regarding the abuse and neglect of children's welfare to include notifying the military services if a guardian or parent is in the military.

**SB-951-SD-2**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:41:28 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/12/2025 8:50:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.

## **Testimony in Support of SB 951 Relating to Child Protection**

Dear Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong SUPPORT for SB 951, which requires mandatory reports of child abuse or neglect to include the military status of the child's parent or guardian, if known. This bill also ensures that the Department of Human Services (DHS) informs the appropriate United States military authority when there is sufficient information to identify that one of the parents, guardians, or alleged perpetrators is a member of the military.

Child abuse and neglect are serious and often devastating issues that affect the well-being and future of vulnerable children in our communities. As we continue to work towards stronger protections for our children, it is crucial to understand the unique dynamics that may exist in families with military connections. This bill helps bridge that gap by creating a more comprehensive reporting system that ensures no child is left behind in the pursuit of safety and justice.

The proposed measure is a critical step in recognizing the intersection of child welfare and military service. Many military families face unique challenges that can place strain on the family unit, including frequent relocations, deployment, and other stressors associated with military life. In some cases, these stressors may contribute to the risk of child abuse or neglect. By identifying military families in reports of abuse or neglect, the appropriate military authorities can intervene in ways that might otherwise be missed. This can ensure that services, support, and resources available to military families are fully utilized to address the needs of the child and prevent further harm.

Furthermore, military service members are held to specific standards of conduct and are subject to military jurisdiction, which includes protocols for handling cases of abuse or neglect involving their personnel. By mandating the reporting of military status, this bill ensures that the military can address these cases with the specialized resources and procedures it has in place for such situations. It also facilitates coordination between military and civilian authorities, ensuring that families receive the best possible support and intervention from all parties involved.

The inclusion of military status in reports of child abuse or neglect not only supports the child's immediate safety and well-being but also ensures that appropriate investigations and actions are taken. This bill promotes accountability and facilitates a more effective system of child protection.

I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill, as it will provide an additional layer of protection for children in military families, while also enhancing collaboration between civilian and military authorities to address abuse and neglect.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Tristine Rodrigues

Committee on Human Services and Homelessness  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair  
Hawai'i State Capitol

Committee on Public Safety  
Hawai'i State Legislature  
Rep. Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Hawai'i State Capitol

Wednesday, March 12, 2025  
8:50 am Via Video Conference  
Conference Rm 411  
Hawai'i State Capitol

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB 951

Dear Chair Marten, Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee,

My name is Melanie Cumbee and I am writing to express my strong support for SB 951, which aims to enhance communication and coordination between military and civilian authorities regarding incidents of child neglect, abuse, and other family-related issues involving service members. As a veteran of the United States Army and a current social work student, I have personally witnessed gaps in support for military families when they face crises that are outside of their own direct chain of command. This bill is necessary to fill those gaps and allow service members and their families access to the full range of assistance to which they are entitled.

One of the most serious problems that I have seen is the glaring "blank space" where there is no coverage when Soldiers are facing legal or social issues outside the military. When a military service member or family member is involved in a civilian child neglect or abuse case or other serious issues, the penalties they face are normally confined to the immediate zone. They may be required to pay a fine, do community service, or receive other penalties, but these are not necessarily equivalent to effective intervention or long-term change. Without the coordination of the civilian and military authorities, the service member will be able to remain in their position without anyone in their unit being aware of the problems going on in their home life. This lack of coordination often results in missed opportunities for intervention, support, and, in some cases, accountability.

Soldiers spend most of their time with their units, and their leaders and fellow Soldiers are the ones who understand them best, making them uniquely positioned to acknowledge concerns and determine where support is needed most. When child neglect or abuse issues do emerge, their commanders need to be notified so they can provide critical resources such as parenting classes, counseling, family therapy, and leave to allow the soldier to address family issues in the proper manner. The majority of these resources are provided to military personnel free of charge, but



they go unused because Soldiers try to keep personal problems in the closet out of fear of punishment or embarrassment. By ensuring that the appropriate family issues are brought to the notice of the military chain of command, SB 951 would help service members to obtain help they need to improve their home lives and, indirectly, those of their children and spouses.

As a matter of social work, early intervention and coordinated case management are critical in addressing family stability and child welfare matters. From my training, I have learned that military children also experience their own stressors in the way of frequent relocations, parent deployments, and expectations from the military culture. Without an open reporting system and communication between civilian and military agencies, these children might slip through the cracks and go unnoticed and neglected or abused for months. With both military and civilian social services educated and active in solving family problems, this will help develop a holistic system that prioritizes the best interest of the child while also equipping the service member with the means to transform.

In instances of egregious neglect or abuse, command needs to be notified so that they can decide if continued service is warranted. Certain conduct does not align with military values or service, and it is crucial that command possesses the information they need to make intelligent decisions about a service member's fitness for duty. This is not just an issue of accountability but also of protecting the general integrity of the military and ensuring that children in military families are not put at risk because serious issues have gone unaddressed.

SB 951 is a long-overdue step to assist military families in gaining full benefits afforded them and to bridge the gap currently existing between military and civilian systems. This bill would enhance coordination, increase access to resources, and improve child welfare outcomes by holding leaders of military personnel accountable for being aware of family issues requiring intervention. As a former Soldier and future social worker, I strongly believe we have an obligation to our military families to support and safeguard them, and this bill is a key component of that responsibility.

I humbly ask that you sign SB 951 and thank you for your time and consideration on this issue. Thank you for being an advocate for Hawai'i's military families' health.

Sincerely,

Melanie N. Cumbee, District 7