STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3763

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 10 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1705
H.D. 1
S.D. 2

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CHILD CUSTODY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to allow licensed mental health counselors to be appointed as child custody evaluators.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and two individuals.

Your Committee finds that child custody evaluations play a critical role in assisting the court in determining the best interests of the child. However, prolonged delays in receiving child custody evaluations can intensify family conflict, extend instability, and increase stress on children during already difficult transitions. Your Committee further finds that licensed mental health counselors are suited to serve as child custody evaluators because they possess graduate-level education, clinical training, and experience in assessing trauma, family dynamics, and child development. By expanding eligibility of child custody evaluators to include licensed mental health counselors, this measure will increase the pool of qualified professionals available to conduct these evaluations, thereby helping to reduce

backlogs, shorten wait times, and improve access to timely, trauma-informed assessments for families navigating custody disputes.

Your Committee has amended this measure by making it effective upon its approval.

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 H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, S.D. 2.

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

Committee on Judiciary,

KARL RHOADS, Chair

The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Judiciary
JDC

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:
HB 1705 HD1 SD1	HHS, JDC	4/1/26

☐ The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.

If so, then the previous decision was to: _____

The Recommendation is:

☐ Pass, unamended 2312 ☑ Pass, with amendments 2311 ☐ Hold 2310 ☐ Recommit 2313

Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)				✓
CHANG, Stanley	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.	✓			
AWA, Brenton	✓			
TOTAL				

Recommendation: ☑ Adopted ☐ Not Adopted

Chair's or Designee's Signature:

Distribution: Original — File with Committee Report; Yellow — Committee; Pink — Drafting Agency

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

Revised: 01/02/26