
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LIABILITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that nonprofit child
2 welfare service organizations provide essential, mandated
3 services to children and families in partnership with the State,
4 that otherwise would have to be performed by the State itself.
5 The legislature further finds that nonprofit child welfare
6 service organizations are now facing increasing challenges in
7 securing general and professional liability insurance coverage.
8 Many insurance carriers have withdrawn from the market, reduced
9 coverage limits, or imposed drastically higher premiums, making
10 coverage either unavailable or unaffordable.

11 The legislature additionally finds that without adequate
12 liability insurance coverage, nonprofit child welfare service
13 organizations cannot maintain state contracts or deliver
14 critically needed services. Furthermore, the legislature finds
15 that rising insurance costs combined with stagnant contract
16 reimbursements threaten the financial sustainability of these
17 nonprofit organizations. These circumstances risk disrupting



1 services provided by nonprofit child welfare service
2 organizations under contract with the State, which would leave
3 vulnerable children and families without necessary resources and
4 place an unsustainable burden on state agencies.

5 Moreover, the legislature finds that the underlying cause
6 of the crisis faced by nonprofit child welfare service
7 organizations is the growing frequency and severity of lawsuits
8 involving child-related tragedies. Litigation strategies often
9 include naming nonprofit child welfare service organizations in
10 lawsuits even when they are not found responsible, resulting in
11 nuclear judgments that destabilize the insurance market. As a
12 result, nonprofit child welfare service organizations are
13 increasingly forced to rely on excess and surplus lines
14 insurance coverage, which offers reduced liability protection at
15 significantly higher costs.

16 The legislature further finds that legislative and
17 administrative solutions are needed to ensure that nonprofit
18 organizations that provide child welfare services to children
19 and families can obtain reasonable and sustainable liability
20 insurance coverage, thereby safeguarding the continuity of
21 essential services for children and families across the State.



1 If this issue is not addressed, nonprofit child welfare service
2 organizations may withdraw from this type of work, creating
3 significant gaps in services and straining state agencies that
4 are tasked with filling those gaps.

5 The purpose of this Act is to provide certain liability
6 protections for nonprofit child welfare service organizations
7 that are under contract with the State to provide child welfare
8 services to children and families, including:

- 9 (1) Prohibiting pre- and post-judgment interest and
10 punitive damages for nonprofit child welfare service
11 organizations;
- 12 (2) Requiring actions against nonprofit child welfare
13 service organizations to be tried by the court, except
14 in certain circumstances;
- 15 (3) Removing joint and several liability for nonprofit
16 child welfare service organizations; and
- 17 (4) Specifying that no bond shall be required from a
18 nonprofit child welfare service organization on
19 appeal.



1 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
2 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
3 as follows:

4 "CHAPTER

5 **NONPROFIT CHILD WELFARE SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS; LIABILITY**

6 § -1 **Definitions.** As used in this chapter, "nonprofit
7 child welfare service organization" means a nonprofit child
8 welfare organization that is under contract with the department
9 of human services to provide welfare services to children.

10 § -2 **Liability; interest; punitive damages.** A nonprofit
11 child welfare service organization shall not be liable for:

- 12 (1) Interest before or after judgment; or
13 (2) Punitive damages.

14 § -3 **Jury trial, when.** Any action against a nonprofit
15 child welfare service organization to which this chapter applies
16 shall be tried by the court without a jury; provided that the
17 court, with the consent of all the parties, may order a trial
18 with a jury, whose verdict shall have the same effect as if
19 trial by jury had been a matter of right.

20 § -4 **Nonprofit child welfare service organization as a**
21 **tortfeasor; abolition of joint and several liability.** (a)



1 Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, in any action in
2 which a nonprofit child welfare service organization is
3 determined to be a tortfeasor together with one or more other
4 tortfeasors, the nonprofit child welfare service organization
5 shall be liable only for the percentage share of damages
6 attributable to the nonprofit child welfare service
7 organization.

8 (b) For purposes of this section, the liability of a
9 nonprofit child welfare service organization shall include its
10 vicarious liability for the acts or omissions of its officers
11 and employees.

12 § -5 **Judgment on appeal; no bond.** When an appeal is
13 taken by a nonprofit child welfare service organization, and the
14 operation or enforcement of the judgment is stayed, no bond,
15 obligation, or other security shall be required from the
16 nonprofit child welfare service organization."

17 SECTION 3. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
18 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
19 begun before its effective date.

20 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

DHS; Nonprofit Child Welfare Service Organizations; Child Welfare Services; Liability; Trial; Bond

Description:

Provides certain liability protections for nonprofit child welfare service organizations that are under contract with the Department of Human Services to provide child welfare services to children and families. Prohibits pre- and post-judgment interest and punitive damages for nonprofit child welfare service organizations. Requires actions against nonprofit child welfare service organizations to be tried by the court, except in certain circumstances. Removes joint and several liability for nonprofit child welfare service organizations. Specifies that no bond shall be required from a nonprofit child welfare service organization on appeal. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD3)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

