

JAN 30 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that more initiatives
2 must be established to address the unmet needs of children and
3 families in the State's child welfare system.

4 The legislature also finds that the malama ohana working
5 group was established within the office of wellness and
6 resilience to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes
7 to the State's existing child welfare system. In a report
8 submitted to the 2025 legislature, the malama ohana working
9 group recommended establishing preventative programs and
10 comprehensive services to reduce the risk of families entering
11 the child welfare system.

12 The legislature recognizes that other states have
13 successfully reduced the number of families involved in child
14 welfare systems by implementing innovative programs that include
15 assistance with system navigation, financial assistance, and
16 parenting classes and other resources to strengthen families.



1 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
2 department of human services to establish a five-year child
3 welfare system diversion and intervention pilot program to
4 provide services for families and children involved, or at risk
5 of involvement or reinvolvement, with child welfare services.

6 SECTION 2. (a) The department of human services shall
7 collaborate with the office of wellness and resilience to design
8 a child welfare system diversion and intervention pilot program.
9 The department of human services shall implement and administer
10 the pilot program.

11 (b) The pilot program shall provide assistance and
12 services for families and children that are involved, or at risk
13 of involvement or reinvolvement, with child welfare services.
14 The assistance and services shall include:

- 15 (1) Financial assistance and resources to help meet the
16 families' food, clothing, hygiene, housing, parenting,
17 childcare, household, and transportation needs; and
18 (2) A trauma-informed intervention program to improve
19 caregiver-child relationships and parenting skills
20 through teaching and coaching on positive
21 communication, child behavior management, and calming



1 and emotional regulation strategies for both the
2 caregiver and child.

3 (c) The department of human services, in collaboration
4 with the office of wellness and resilience, shall submit a
5 report of the department's findings and recommendations
6 regarding the child welfare system diversion and intervention
7 pilot program, including any proposed legislation, to the
8 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
9 the regular session of 2031.

10 (d) The department of human services may contract with
11 public and private entities to design, implement, and administer
12 the pilot program.

13 (e) The pilot program shall cease to exist July 1, 2031.

14 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
15 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
16 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to
17 design, implement, and administer a child welfare system
18 diversion and intervention pilot program pursuant to this Act,
19 including contracting with public and private entities to
20 provide necessary services.

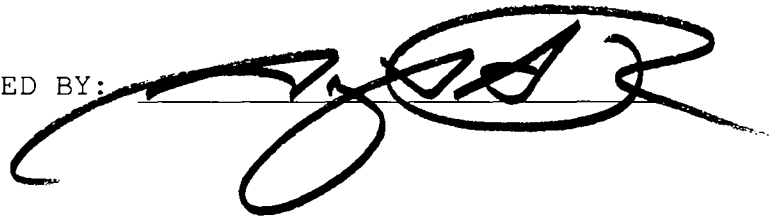


1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
2 human services for the purposes of this Act.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

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INTRODUCED BY:

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is highly cursive and difficult to decipher, but appears to contain the letters 'J', 'A', and 'R'.

S.B. NO. 3272

Report Title:

DHS; OWR; Child Welfare System; Diversion and Intervention;
Pilot Program; Report; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Department of Human Services, in collaboration with the Office of Wellness and Resilience, to design a 4-year Child Welfare System Diversion and Intervention Pilot Program to support families and children involved or at risk of involvement or reinvolvement with child welfare services. Specifies that the Department of Human Services shall implement and administer the pilot program. Allows the Department to contract with public and private entities to provide necessary services. Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates moneys.

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

