

Honolulu, Hawaii
FEB 09 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1565
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness, to which was referred H.B. No. 1565 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate funds for a working group within the Judiciary to improve family court processes, including access to legal representation for youth in the child welfare system.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Judiciary; Office of Wellness and Resilience; HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative, Epic 'Ohana; Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!; National Center for Youth Law; Hawaii Youth Services Network; National Association of Counsel for Children; Hale Kipa; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that the existing family court process has left many youth believing that they were not well-informed regarding decisions being made on their behalf and lacked input into those decisions. Your Committee believes that this measure takes an important step toward improving family court processes in



the State and addresses the need to provide better guidance to Hawaii's youth when they face life-altering decisions.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Amending the composition of the working group, including removing the guardian ad litem and Mālama 'Ohana Working Group representatives and allowing individuals, rather than experts, with lived expertise to serve;
- (2) Allowing the co-chairs of the working group to invite other appropriate persons to serve as members of the working group;
- (3) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation amount of \$50,000. Your Committee also requests that, as this measure moves through the legislative process, an effective date of upon approval be considered for the working group.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services & Homelessness that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1565, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1565, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services &
Homelessness,



LISA MARTEN, Chair



