

Honolulu, Hawaii

**FEB 20**, 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1565  
H.D. 2

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

Madame:

Your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 1565, H.D. 1, 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 Hawaiian Affairs; Office of Wellness and Resilience; HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative; National Association of Counsel for Children; National Center for Youth Law; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that improving family court processes in child welfare cases is necessary to ensure that youth are meaningfully informed, heard, and protected throughout court proceedings. Your Committee further finds that establishing a working group within the Judiciary to examine access to legal services for youth, informed by lived experience and practices in other jurisdictions, is an appropriate step toward strengthening



fairness, efficiency, and accountability in the child welfare system.

Your Committee has amended this measure by clarifying that:

- (1) The working group shall include individuals with lived experience in navigating the state child welfare system while minors, not lived expertise; and
- (2) The appropriation to the Judiciary may be used for a site visit, report drafting, a working group facilitator, and paid compensation for working group members with lived experience in the state child welfare system either as a minor or parent.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1565, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1565, H.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Judiciary &  
Hawaiian Affairs,



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DAVID A. TARNAS, Chair



