

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **3283**

Honolulu, Hawaii

**MAR 30 2026**

RE: H.B. No. 1565  
H.D. 2  
S.D. 1

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. 1565, H.D. 2, entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a working group within the Judiciary to improve family court processes, including access to legal representation for youth in the child welfare system; and
- (2) Appropriate funds for the working group.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Judiciary, Department of Human Services, Office of Wellness and Resilience, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, National Association of Counsel for Children, Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, Hawaii Youth Services Network, Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i, HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative, and nineteen individuals.

Your Committee finds that youth with lived experience in the child welfare system have reported feeling unheard, under-informed, and excluded from decisions affecting their safety,



placement, and future. Providing access to legal representation for young people in foster care empowers them to understand their rights and participate meaningfully in court proceedings and leads to improved outcomes, including faster permanency. This measure will strengthen fairness, transparency, and trust in the child welfare system and support better safety and permanent outcomes.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of March 22, 2075, to encourage further discussion.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, contains an unspecified appropriation amount. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it consider an appropriation amount of \$140,000 to be allocated as follows:

- (1) \$10,000 for site visits;
- (2) \$42,000 for report writing;
- (3) \$70,000 for facilitation; and
- (4) \$18,000 for the compensation of working group members with lived experience.

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. 1565, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1565, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

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



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KARL RHOADS, Chair



