

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 06, 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1705
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 Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO CHILD CUSTODY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to allow licensed mental health counselors to be appointed as child custody evaluators.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and one individual.

Your Committee finds that families statewide face significant delays in receiving child custody evaluations due to a limited number of qualified evaluators and growing demand in family court cases. Your Committee further finds that these delays prolong uncertainty for children, increase costs for parents, and disproportionately harm communities already facing systemic inequities, including Native Hawaiian families. Your Committee believes that expanding eligibility to licensed mental health counselors will strengthen the evaluator workforce, promote timely and culturally responsive assessments, and improve access to fair custody determinations.

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. 1705, H.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Third Reading.

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



DAVID A. TARNAS, Chair



