

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

3129

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 23 2026

RE: H.B. No. 1705
H.D. 1
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 Health and Human Services, 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 and intent 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.

Your Committee finds that the State faces significant challenges in providing timely and equitable child custody evaluations for families engaged in family court proceedings. Your Committee further finds that existing law authorizes certain mental health professionals with master's degree-level training to serve as child custody evaluators but does not extend this opportunity to licensed mental health counselors, who possess equivalent graduate-level education, training, and clinical expertise as their peers. This measure expands the pool of qualified professionals that can be appointed as child custody evaluators in the State, to reduce costs and delays in child custody evaluation court proceedings and ensure families have




greater access to timely and equitable child custody determinations.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting an effective date of January 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



