

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 30 , 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2861  
S.D. 2  
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 S.B. No. 2861, S.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Require the Office of Wellness and Resilience to develop a comprehensive plan for the establishment of a Kakou Pilot Program to support families and children in need;
- (2) Require the Office to submit preliminary and final reports to the Legislature on the comprehensive plan; and
- (3) Authorize the Office to expend Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds for the purposes of the Kakou Pilot Program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Human Services; Office of Wellness and Resilience; Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i; and one



individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from one individual.

Your Committee finds that Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federally funded program that provides cash assistance, work opportunities, and other support services to low-income families with children. TANF funds can be used for essential needs such as food, housing, utilities, child care, and transportation, as well as job training. Your Committee further finds that due to TANF's strict eligibility requirements and high administrative hurdles, the State has accumulated an estimated \$470,000,000 in unspent TANF funds. This measure requires the development of a comprehensive plan before creating a Kakou Pilot Program that will leverage available federal funds, which will ensure that the State complies with federal requirements and remains responsive to the needs of local families, ultimately laying the foundation for long-term, sustainable support.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying that the Office of Wellness and Resilience, in consultation with the Department of Human Services, is to develop the comprehensive plan to establish the Kakou Pilot Program;
- (2) Amending the intended recipients of the various services to be created under the comprehensive plan;
- (3) Amending the contents of the preliminary report to include a recommended implementation structure, which identifies an administering agency or agencies for the Pilot Program, and a recommendation on whether the Pilot Program should be established;
- (4) Replacing the Office of Wellness and Resilience with the agency or agencies recommended in the preliminary report as the agency or agencies authorized to expend Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds for purposes of the Pilot Program;
- (5) Amending the definition of "eligible families";
- (6) Removing its sunset date;



- (7) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (8) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee notes that the preferred effective date for this measure is upon approval. Your Committee also notes that, because this measure already includes an expiration date for the planning period of June 30, 2027, an overall sunset date for this measure is unnecessary.

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 S.B. No. 2861, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2861, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

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

  
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LISA MARTEN, Chair



