



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

**JOSH GREEN, MD**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

**KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD**  
ADMINISTRATOR

1177 Alakea Street, #402, Honolulu, HI 96813

Phone: 587-0788 Fax: 587-0783 [www.shpda.org](http://www.shpda.org)

April 6, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to  
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: **SB 3204-SD1-HD1 -- RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT  
PROGRAM**

HEARING: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 @ 2:00 pm; Conference Room 308

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

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Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports SB 3204-SD1-HD1, with comments.

SHPDA strongly supports the two-year Family Resilience Pilot Project within the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) to reduce preventable child abuse and neglect. The OWR program will hire and train 5 trauma-informed peer support resource navigators to reach out to as many as 80 families who are eligible for temporary assistance for needy family (TANF) funding.

The navigators will provide family support and parenting classes and other support services to the families. There are other details, goals, and parameters included in the proposal, but we believe this pilot is achievable, scalable when proven successful, and critically important to reduce child abuse and neglect among families in need.

Thanks for hearing this bill, and for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA



STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF WELLNESS AND RESILIENCE  
KE KE'ENA KŪPA'A MAULI OLA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
415 S. BERETANIA ST. #415  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**Testimony on S.B. 3204 SD1 HD1**  
**RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM**

Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.; Room Number: 308

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) **SUPPORTS** S.B. 3204 SD1 HD1, Relating to Family Resilience Pilot Program and requests amendments.

The mission of the Office of Wellness and Resilience is to strengthen state systems and services by advancing hope-centered principles and supporting Hawai'i's transition toward becoming a trauma-informed state. As the state agency that administered the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group, our office had the privilege of working closely with individuals with lived experience and expertise in the child welfare service system, as well as with state departments and community partners. The recommendations in the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group Report center the voices and experiences of children and families most impacted by the system.

This report, submitted to the 2025 Hawai'i State Legislature, underscores the cascading impact of poverty and the urgent need for concrete supports that prevent families from entering the child welfare service system.<sup>1</sup> Youth and families with lived experience consistently shared that most families who come to the system's attention require support services—not protective intervention—to remain safe and stable.

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<sup>1</sup> Mālama 'Ohana Working Group. (2024). *Mālama 'ohana working group report to the legislature: Findings and recommendations of the Mālama 'ohana working group*. State of Hawai'i. Retrieved from [https://owr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/OWR-MOWG\\_2024Report\\_Combined.pdf](https://owr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/OWR-MOWG_2024Report_Combined.pdf)

A central element of S.B. 3204 SD1 HD1 is the integration of trained, trauma-informed peer support navigators with lived experience.<sup>2</sup> These navigators are uniquely equipped to help families access community-based services and resources. Peer support is especially powerful because it connects families with individuals who understand their challenges firsthand. For children, parents, and caregivers, engaging with someone from their own community who has walked a similar path builds trust and strengthens the connection between families and the services intended to help them. This trust increases the likelihood that families will engage with and benefit from available interventions.<sup>3</sup>

The OWR is engaged in ongoing discussions with the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division (BESSD) regarding the potential use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for the proposed pilot program. OWR defers to DHS and TANF administrators on this issue.

The OWR respectfully requests that the committee consider the amending section 3 to say, "The sum appropriated shall be expended by the ~~office of wellness and resilience~~ department of human services for the purposes of this Act" (page 5, lines 9 – 10) as DHS is required to be the state agency recipient of TANF funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

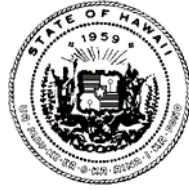
Tia L.R. Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA  
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience

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<sup>2</sup> Peer Support Specialist Working Group. (2025). *Peer support specialist working group report to the legislature. Peer Support Specialist Working Group Framework*. State of Hawai'i. Retrieved from [https://owr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/PSSWG-Framework\\_Final.pdf](https://owr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/PSSWG-Framework_Final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Saeteurn, E. R., Wu, Q., Vasiliou, N., Mabingani, D., & Krysik, J. (2022). Peer parent programs in child welfare: A systematic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 129, 105682. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2022.105682>

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

April 6, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 3204 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM.**

Hearing: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the bill to further utilize federal funds to support families who may be at risk of entering the child welfare system, offers comments, and requests clarification. DHS defers to the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) and agrees with the proposed amendment to change the expending agency to DHS.

This bill proposes to establish within OWR a family resilience pilot program to build family resilience and provide comprehensive specialized support services to eligible families and to appropriate Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support the pilot.

Pursuant to section 401, Title IV-A of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 601], states may utilize federal TANF funds for benefits, programs, and services that meet one of the following purposes:

- (1) Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
- (2) End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- (3) Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and

(4) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The proposed trauma-informed peer support resource navigator services described in Section 2, subsection (a), paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), may be classified under Purpose 1; therefore, “means testing” for TANF eligibility is required.

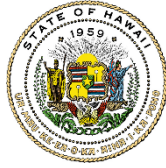
For the committee’s information, DHS is the specified grantee with the federal grants management and the authorized state agency to receive the federal TANF block grant and any reserve funds remaining from any grant year; therefore, the federal TANF funds may not be appropriated directly to other state agencies or entities. Therefore, DHS agrees with the amendment to change the expending agency from OWR to DHS. In addition, expending federal TANF funds must comply with the requirements and provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Additionally, in accordance with 8 U.S.C. 1611(a), an individual who is not a qualified immigrant is not eligible for any federal public benefit or services defined in 8 U.S.C. 1611(c). Therefore, children and families who may receive benefits or support services through the pilot program must either be U.S. citizens, qualified immigrants according to the terms described in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.], or qualified individuals lawfully residing in the U.S. in accordance with the Compacts of Free Association. If the legislature intends the pilot program to provide benefits or support services regardless of a citizenship status, state funds will be required to service non-TANF qualified children and families.

The Department’s Benefit, Employment and Support Services Division, which administers the TANF program, will continue to work with OWR, DHS Child Welfare Services Branch, and the Family Resource Center Pilot Program to assess the monthly parenting classes or cultural family strengthening services that would be most effective to meet families’ needs and will seek policy clarification from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, regarding the bill’s proposed use of TANF funds.

DHS respectfully requests that the proposed pilot program and any appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII

Executive Office on Early Learning

Ke'ena Ho'okele Ho'ona'auao Pae Kamali'i o Hawai'i Moku'āina  
2759 South King Street, Room C6  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96826

TO: Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Yuuko Arikawa-Cross, Director  
Executive Office on Early Learning

SUBJECT: Testimony on S.B. No. 3204, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM.  
Committee: FIN  
Date/Time: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

Executive Office on Early Learning's Position: **SUPPORT**

The Executive Office on Early Learning (EOEL) offers the following comments in support of S.B. 3204, H.D. 1, which creates a family resilience pilot program to provide comprehensive specialized support services for families eligible for the temporary assistance to needy families (TANF) program.

This measure aligns with the Early Learning Board's current framework of policy priorities, which is grounded in the Hawai'i Early Childhood State Plan. Specifically, the bill advances State Plan Building Block 2: 'Ohana Partnerships and Engagement by utilizing a peer support model to increase 'ohana access to information about resources, learning opportunities, and public support services.

The pilot program takes a proactive, prevention-focused approach by providing families with tools, resources, and relationships to help address challenges early and reduce the likelihood of involvement with the child welfare system. The use of trauma-informed peer support resource navigators from their own communities who have navigated similar circumstances is particularly impactful. This approach has the potential to build trust, lower barriers to engagement, and help families connect more meaningfully to services they are eligible for. Together, these strategies enhance family engagement and support, which are key elements of a strong and effective early learning system.

We appreciate the Legislature's ongoing investment and shared commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's early learning system for our youngest keiki and their 'ohana. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of S.B. No. 3204, H.D. 1.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SIERRA WHITESIDE  
CHAIRPERSON

DAINTRY BARTOLDUS  
EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA  
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING  
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

April 7, 2026

The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawai'i  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Todd and Committee Members:

**SUBJECT:** SB3204 SD1 HD1 Relating to Family Resilience Pilot Program

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) **strongly supports** the portions of **SB3204 SD1 HD1** that establish trauma-informed peer support resource navigators within the proposed Family Resilience Pilot Program.

A central element of this bill is the integration of trained peer support navigators with lived experience. The Council affirms the value of this approach. Peer support is a proven, culturally grounded model that helps families access community-based services, navigate complex systems, and build trust with providers. For many families, especially those facing trauma, poverty, disability, or child-welfare involvement, connecting with someone who has "walked a similar path" is often the difference between engaging in services or falling through the cracks.

At the State Council on Developmental Disabilities, we have seen firsthand how impactful peer support can be. Our own programs that incorporate peer supports consistently demonstrate stronger family engagement, increased follow-through on referrals, and improved confidence among caregivers. When families feel understood and supported by someone from their own community, they are far more likely to access and benefit from the services intended to help them.

Because of this experience, we are in strong support of the bill's provisions that:

- Hire and train trauma-informed peer support resource navigators;
- Ensure alignment with the Peer Support Specialists Working Group recommendations;
- Use motivational interviewing and culturally responsive practices; and
- Connect families to benefits, parenting supports, and community resources.

However, the Council respectfully defers to the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) on all other aspects of SB3204 SD1 HD1, including program design, implementation, reporting requirements, and the use of TANF funds. OWR is the appropriate agency to speak to the broader structure and administration of the Family Resilience Pilot Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to strengthening families and preventing involvement with the child welfare system. We stand ready to collaborate and share our experience as this initiative moves forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **Support of SB3204 SD1 HD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus  
Executive Administrator



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

Apr 7, 2026

#### MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
State Capitol  
State of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**SUBJECT: Support for SB3204 SD1 HD1** – Relating to the Family Resilience Pilot Program

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a Center for Independent Living serving disabled people and their families statewide. SB3204 SD1 HD1 establishes a two-year Family Resilience Pilot Program within the Office of Wellness and Resilience to provide trauma-informed, culturally responsive supports to eligible families, including peer support resource navigators, benefits navigation, and connections to parenting classes and cultural family-strengthening services. Many families who would be reached by this program include children with disabilities and parents with disabilities, for whom early, community-based supports can prevent child welfare involvement and keep families safely together in their own homes.

From a Finance perspective, this bill uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to invest in primary prevention and universal supports recommended by the Malama Ohana Working Group, rather than waiting for families to enter more costly crisis and child welfare systems. Funding peer support resource navigators and community-based services that link families to benefit, housing, education, and employment can reduce later expenditures on foster care, institutional placements, and emergency interventions while strengthening protective factors in the community.



[www.AlohaILHawaii.org](http://www.AlohaILHawaii.org)

#### **MISSION**

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We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Roxanne U. Bolden

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Valerie Yamada

##### **Vice Chair**

Zora Shove

##### **Treasurer**

Jonathan Yap

##### **Member**

Scott Suzuki  
Sheila Castaneda  
Jennifer Hartssock

We respectfully urge the Committee on Finance to pass SB3204 SD1 HD1 and support a well-designed, disability-inclusive Family Resilience Pilot Program that leverages TANF funds to build family resilience upstream.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Roxanne Bolden  
Executive Director



April 3, 2026

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 3204 SD1 HD1  
Relating to Family Resilience Pilot Program**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Aloha United Way supports S.B. 3204 SD1 HD1, which establishes a Family Resilience Pilot Program within the Office of Wellness and Resilience to strengthen families and prevent entry into the child welfare system.

Across Hawai'i, many families experience periods of financial and personal stress that can place them at risk of crisis. According to Aloha United Way's ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) research, 40%<sup>1</sup> of households struggle to afford the basic cost of living, even while working. For these families, even a temporary setback such as job loss, childcare disruption, or unexpected expenses can create instability that affects both parents and children.

From a fiscal perspective, when these challenges go unaddressed, they can escalate into situations that require significantly more costly public interventions, including child welfare involvement, emergency services, and long-term support systems. Early, targeted support is a more cost-effective approach that helps stabilize families before crises occur.

S.B. 3204 SD1 HD1 recognizes that early support and navigation of resources can prevent small challenges from becoming family crises. Many families are eligible for public benefits and community services but face barriers in accessing them, including complicated application processes and limited awareness of available resources. Peer support resource navigators can play a critical role in helping families connect to the assistance they need before situations escalate.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>



Aloha United Way supports the pilot’s focus on trauma-informed and culturally responsive services, as well as its emphasis on community-based support and parenting education. Programs that strengthen protective factors, including social connections, parenting knowledge, and access to concrete supports, are proven strategies for improving family stability and reducing the need for more costly interventions later. Prevention-based investments such as these help families remain stable while also reducing long-term public costs associated with child welfare involvement and crisis services.

This measure represents a thoughtful and fiscally responsible approach to strengthening families and supporting long-term resilience in Hawai’i’s communities. We urge you to support S.B.3204 SD1 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Michelle Bartell  
President & CEO

To: House Committee on Finance  
RE: **SB3204 SD1 HD1 – Relating to Family Resilience Pilot Program**  
Hawaii State Capitol & Videoconference  
April 7, 2026, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, I am submitting this testimony in **SUPPORT of SB3204 SD1 HD1**, which establishes a two-year Family Resilience Pilot Program within the Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) and appropriates Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds.

In Hawai'i, the well-being of our people has long been understood through the strength of 'ohana. Native Hawaiian values recognize that individual wellness is inseparable from family and community well-being. Concepts such as lōkahi, the balance of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, and kuleana, our shared responsibility to care for one another, remain foundational to resilient communities.

Families across our State continue to experience complex and interconnected challenges, including economic strain, mental health stressors, housing instability, and the cumulative impacts of recent public health emergencies and natural disasters. These conditions underscore the need for coordinated, prevention-focused strategies that strengthen families before crises escalate.

This bill takes a thoughtful and pono approach by situating the family resilience pilot program within the OWR. This placement promotes alignment across systems and emphasizes culturally responsive, community-informed practices established within the Mālama 'Ohana Working Group Final Report<sup>1</sup>.

Establishing a pilot program allows the State to evaluate outcomes, identify best practices, and ensure that future efforts are both effective and accountable. The program shall also train trauma informed peer support navigators and assist families to identify goals and connect them to community resources and cultural family strengthening services. This bill provides our most vulnerable community members what they need in their times of need.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo  
Director of Research and Economic Policy

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<sup>1</sup> Mālama 'Ohana Working Group Final Report (URL: <https://www.malamaohana.net/mowg-final-report>)



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF: **SB 3204 SD1 HD1** **RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM**

TO: House Committee on Finance  
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Hearing: Tuesday, April 7, 2026; 2:00 PM; CR 308 and via videoconference

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports SB 3204 SD1, HD1**, which proposes the creation and funding of a two-year Family Resilience Pilot Program within the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

The intent of this measure is to help divert children and families away from involvement with the State's Child Welfare system. This initiative reflects a forward-thinking commitment to Hawai'i's families by offering trauma-informed, early-intervention supports that can prevent challenges from becoming full-blown crises.

For 78 years, Catholic Charities Hawai'i has walked alongside individuals and families statewide who are navigating poverty, housing instability, trauma, and other life-altering hardships. Our staff regularly see how financial pressures, behavioral health conditions, and systemic inequities can strain families to the breaking point—too often resulting in homelessness, family separation, or involvement with the child welfare system.

SB 3204 SD1 HD1 offers a timely and proactive approach to strengthening family well-being. **We support increasing the duration of this pilot program from 1 year to 2 years.** The proposed pilot program can:

- Build and reinforce protective factors within families
- Support positive parenting and enhance family stability
- Improve connections to behavioral health and social service resources
- Reduce long-term public expenditures tied to crisis response

This effort also provides an important opportunity for the State to test, evaluate, and refine culturally responsive and evidence-based models that reflect Hawai'i's unique communities and values. Strengthening family resilience today lays the foundation for healthy keiki, vibrant 'ohana, and more stable communities across our islands.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i respectfully urges the committee to pass this measure and ensure sufficient resources to support its successful implementation. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of this measure. If you have any questions, please contact Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813.



**SB-3204-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/5/2026 5:11:29 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

My name is Jackie Keefe, and I **strongly support SB3204 SD1 HD1**, which establishes trauma-informed peer support resource navigators within the proposed Family Resilience Pilot Program.

Please pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

**SB-3204-HD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 1:09:33 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Todd, Vice Chair Representative Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Please support SB 3204 SD 1 HD 1 relating to family resilience pilot program. I think this bill would be very helpful to families in need of temporary assistance.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu