



March 13, 2013

From: Lisa Kimura, Executive Director,
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii

To: Representative Mele Carroll, Chair; Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair;
House Committee on Human Services

Hearing: March 14, 2013 – 9:30am, House Conference Room 329

RE: IN SUPPORT OF SB 400 SD1, RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES

Dear Chair Carroll, Vice Chair Kobayashi and members of the committee,

I am a committee member of Safe Sleep Hawaii and oversee the Hawaii Cribs for Kids program, administered by Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawaii. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 400 SD 1, which will help create a safe sleeping environment for babies in child care.

Approximately 20% of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) fatalities occur in the hands of a caregiver other than the parents. Currently, Hawaii is one of only seven states in the United States that does not regulate sleep positions in child care centers or family child care homes.

As suffocation is a leading cause of fatal injuries among healthy keiki under the age of 1, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all infants be placed to sleep on their backs, without pillows or loose bedding in the crib. Child care providers and centers should be required to evaluate the safety of their sleep environments and to adhere to standards for the safest sleep environment possible.

By passing this measure, it will help prevent the tragic incidence of infants dying due to unsafe sleeping environments/positions. We strongly recommend you pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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In honor of Ashley and a desire to make a difference, I share our tragedy.

Imagine yourself in this situation. Away from home, in the middle of a Business Trip to Florida. Your cell phone rings, one of your daughters says, your Granddaughter Ashley died.

What do you do..... No one to talk too, to give comfort to, or get comfort from....Your priority is return home to Hawaii as soon as possible, time slows to a snail's pace, while unimaginable thoughts keep you awake.

This is my and my family's tragedy which led me to Safe Sleep Hawaii.

In January of 2002, my 3 month old Granddaughter died, the second day, while under the care of her babysitter. We were told she died due to SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, when infant death can not be explained or prevented. Our Family was in grief but felt this was God's will. When the autopsy was completed, it reviewed that she actually suffocated while sleeping on her stomach on a soft baby quilt. Our outlook changed, we were devastated and now angry. Her death was preventable; someone should have informed us about unsafe sleep environments and practices.

We started to blame ourselves, the professionals, the babysitter, and everyone we possibly could. My daughter blamed herself for returning to work early, for not being more insistent with the babysitter on placing her daughter to sleep on her back.

My Son-In-Law blamed himself for encouraging my daughter to return to work, for not being better informed about caring for infants.

Her mother blamed herself for selecting the babysitter, and not being better informed.

I blamed myself for not being more involved with the care of my granddaughter and in selecting the babysitter.

Family Members and Friends felt sorrow, but more importantly helpless to aid in our struggles.

We all blamed the babysitter for her lack of knowledge, specifically for not knowing the dangers of placing an infant on it's tummy to sleep and using soft bedding and quilts, an unsafe sleep environment.

Our lives have changed, till this day we all live with this tragedy, a bad nightmare that will never go away.

Even with the birth of a second grandchild, the residual affect is evident. His father stopped working for over a year to stay home with his son. My grandson is over protected, constantly under a watchful eye of every family member. As a result, it appears that his development has been slow. Fortunately my grandson has shown his resilience and is doing well.

As a frustrated member of Safe Sleep Hawaii, it has been a challenge to complete our Mission. "Preventing Infant's Death caused by an Unsafe Sleep Environment". All our affiliated organizations, with funding, manpower, regulatory and outdated policies issues, face challenges in assisting Safe Sleep Hawaii in completing our Mission. SB 400 SD 1 when passed, will help move us in strides toward this Mission: "Prevent Infant's Death caused by an Unsafe Sleep Environment".

Today my Family and I know "You don't get a second chance, we'll never know Ashley".

**DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOUR FAMILY, FRIEND OR ANYONE ELSE!!!
PASS THIS BILL!**

Dana Fong
Advocate and Member of Safe Sleep Hawaii