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MĀNOA



February 20, 2013

The Honorable David Ige, Chair  
The Honorable Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair  
Senate Ways and Means Committee  
State Capitol, Room 211  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Senators:

**RE: SB 815, SD1, Relating to Children**

I am writing to urge your support for this legislation to support the continuation of the Early Court within the Hawaii Family Court. I am testifying as a private citizen to bring to your attention the critically important work being done by the Safe Babies Court Team.

As a member of the Access to Justice Commission (but not testifying on behalf of that Commission), I know few as voiceless in accessing justice as the infants and toddlers who are part of the system because of the neglect and abuse they have received by the family from whom they should be receiving loving care. The Safe Babies Court Team provides the "voice" for these very young children by educating and supporting those working with these families with the objective that these children become part of a stable home and family.

As a specialist in the education of young children and a faculty member at the University of Hawaii (but not testifying on behalf of the University), I know that the long-term consequences of abuse and neglect in the first months and years of life cannot be fully calculated in the educational and vocational outcomes of the children and its impact on their future health. The Safe Babies Court Team is committed to reversing the negative effects and creating a healthy, productive future for these babies.

Therefore, I urge your support for SB 815,SD1 to provide \$130,000 to assist the work of the Safe Babies Court Team, with the understanding that these requested funds should not supplant the Judiciary's existing funding or its 2013 legislative budget request.

Mahalo for your support for this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean L. Johnson".

Jean L. Johnson, DrPH  
Director (Acting)  
Testifying as a private citizen.



February 21, 2013

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair House Finance Committee,  
Representative Scott Nishimoto, Vice-Chair House Finance Committee  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room  
Honolulu, Hi 96813

Re: HB 1436, Relating to Children

Dear Representatives Luke and Members of the House Finance Committee

I am Patria Weston-Lee, LCSW and Program Officer with Consuelo Foundation, testifying in support of HB 1436, which would provide funding support for the Early Court within the Hawaii Family Court. The Hawaii Early Court was established by the Family Court several years ago in collaboration with the national ZERO TO THREE organization. I have worked as a provider within the network of organizations serving the children and families involved with Early Court.

There are about 224 infants (under one year old) involved in the child welfare system. Consuelo Foundation sponsored the training and pilot of an intervention designed to serve infants and up to two years old within the Child Welfare System. The treatment is called the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch up Intervention. Early Court was key in linking families with the best available treatments available to children and families. Early Court also advocated for the appropriate treatment options in our system.

The amount of advocacy and coordination that was done in our community around these important issues of best serving our most vulnerable children and families, must be maintained and built upon. \$130,000 is requested to support the court coordinator's transportation to visit children and parents, emergency housing assistance, a secure opening at a residential drug and alcohol facility that will accommodate a mother and child, develop and implement an incentive program similar to the successful model utilized in Family Drug Court, training and professional development of court team members and community partners, and create and utilize an enhanced visitation and parenting coaching site in Leeward Oahu.

Mahalo for your consideration and advocacy on this important matter.

Respectfully,

Patria Weston-Lee