



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
707 Richards Street, Suite 525
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 29, 2016

TO: The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 1346 HD1 – Relating to Youth

Hearing: Wednesday, March 2, 2016, 11:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

OFFICE'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) supports the measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget. OYS currently procures programs and services statewide that incorporates a positive youth development framework for youth and their families to develop competencies, increase protective factors, and strengthen relationships and resiliency. OYS partners with both government and private community-based agencies to ensure a coordinated continuum of services for youth. There are several common denominators in the lives of our at-risk youth, including but not limited to: a lack of connectedness, a sense of not belonging, and failure in school. These factors contribute to poor decision making – which is evidenced by the fact that middle school aged children represent nearly ½ of all first time juvenile arrests in our state. Providing quality after school and school break programming for middle and high school students will address those very issues, and is a critical prevention tool in the juvenile justice arena.

PURPOSE: The purpose of HB 1346 is to require the Office of Youth Services to coordinate a positive youth development program to provide after school and school break programs for middle and high school students focused on prevention and intervention and appropriate funds for that purpose.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.