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THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2016
State of Hawai'i

February 18, 2016

RE: H.B. 1987, H.D. 1; RELATING TO YOUTH GANGS.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair San Buenaventura and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") supports the intent of H.B. 1987, H.D. 1, however, would urge this committee to consider reallocating the funds associated with H.B. 1987, H.D. 1 to Adult Friends for Youth as an alternative agency to carry out the goals and objectives.

The purpose of H.B. 1987, H.D. 1 is to help reduce the growing youth gang problem in the State by creating prevention and intervention programs as well as providing county police departments with the tools needed to monitor gang activities and establish gang prevention strategies. The creation of additional programs to assist our youth is consistent with this Department's ongoing concern for at-risk youth and the rise of youth gang affiliation. Over the years, our Department has seen increases in crime involving youth offenders who at times are as young as 12 years of age. Yet, despite this rise, there are few programs available to youth offenders in Hawaii, often leaving them with little or no meaningful alternatives.

Our Department would strongly urge this committee to consider appropriating funds associated with H.B. 1987, H.D. 1 for the fiscal year 2016-2017 to Adult Friends for Youth as an alternative. Adult Friends for Youth, was established in 1985 at the University of Hawaii, School of Social Work and boasts a stellar track record and history of sustainability which would ensure that any appropriated funds will be allocated properly and effectively. Adult Friends for Youth works with more than 400 high risk youth per week and has established many successful programs such as their Re-directional Therapy which is an effective therapeutic approach to combat violence, drugs, crime, teen pregnancy, family dysfunction, learning disabilities and anti-social behaviors amount the very high risk youth both in and outside of the classroom. Through the programs implemented by Adult Friends for Youth, their services have successfully changed

the attitudes and behaviors of over numerous different gangs. They have also successfully assisted multiple gang members through the difficult task of integration back into the community.

For all the reasons above, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports the intent of H.B. 1987, H.D. 1 and strongly urges this committee to reallocate any funds to the Adult Friends for Youth Program. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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

February 17, 2016

TO: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Merton Chinen, Executive Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1987, HD1 Relating to Youth Gangs**

Hearing: Thursday, February 18, 2016, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

OFFICE'S POSITION: OYS supports the intent of the measure but requests that any appropriation not affect the priorities in the Executive Biennium Budget. OYS agrees that many factors can contribute toward an apparent increase in graffiti, violence, substance abuse and criminal activities. Risk factors such as poverty, higher concentrations of immigration, lack of parental guidance and supervision, and social disorganization in the community can negatively impact a community and its ability to respond to an apparent youth gang problem. Careful analysis of the extent and depth of the type of criminal activity, and apparent symptoms of underlying social and economic dynamics is required prior to committing valuable resources toward any initiative related to our State's at-risk and troubled youth. The investment of resources to implement a youth gang response system would cost approximately \$850,000 per year, based on funding that OYS coordinated 10 years ago that supported 2 dedicated positions within OYS, and activities such as maintaining a statewide information system, evaluation and research, intelligence and law enforcement, coordinating a multi-agency task force at the state and county levels, and cost of living adjustment.

OYS supports a coordinated and multi-agency approach to strengthen and improve a community's response in addressing problems affecting a community such as youth violence, including a statewide information system and clearinghouse, outreach to and establishing

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relationships with high risk youth to help promote education, self-esteem, individual growth and development, leadership, and responsibility. Currently, prevention and intervention efforts are underway through ongoing partnerships with various resources such as the police, Department of Education, Judiciary, community-based agencies, and the University of Hawaii, to address problems such as increased criminal activities that may be more related to ethnic and geographic concerns rather than a strict definition of gang activity.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to appropriate funds for a coordinated gang response system to include the county police departments, and the Office of Youth Services

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

TESTIMONY

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 18, 2016

2:00 p.m.; Conference Room 325

Rep. Karl Rhoads, Chair, Judiciary Committee, Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura,
Vice-Chair

By: Dennis Arakaki for the Kalihi Community Youth Violence and Gang
Prevention and Intervention Task Group.

Aloha Mai Keia auinala kakou, Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair San Buenaventura and members of the House Judiciary Committee. I stand in strong support of HB 1987.

As the convenor of the Kalihi Community Youth Violence and Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Group, I want to relay our concerns for the growing incidences of youth violence in our communities and neighborhoods. We have seen and heard reports about a proliferation of violence on school campuses, parks, housing complex', fast food establishments and almost all public places that youth gather. These fights, that some refer to as gang fights, occur quickly as young people use the latest communication devices to spread the word which allow them to gather and disperse very quickly.

Kalihi is a melting pot of diverse cultures and ethnicities where many young immigrants and families get their start. The socio-economic factors that are woven throughout the community lead many young people feeling isolated and even excluded from the mainstream cultures as well as academic and economic successes. It's unfortunate but there is de facto segregation by ethnicity and socio-economic factors that are not intentional but create a community of youth faced with alienation caused by lack of opportunity to join the mainstream culture. Thus, the so called gangs are centered on territorial identities and ethnic similarities as their source of pride.

At the hearing last week, our coalition recommended that sections be deleted in order to emphasize the importance of the remaining sections and to reduce the appropriations requested. We feel that what is left is the basic tools needed to

coordinate services and to emphasize the importance of prevention and intervention approaches.

Also important are the services provided by the community non-profits that I have also attached an addendum to my testimony which lists programs and services that are vital to prevention and intervention of youth violence, delinquency and gang activity.

While the bill is introduced at the request of the Kalihi Youth Violence and Gang Prevention and Intervention Task Group, the signs of organized youth gang activities are island wide and even state wide. Kalihi is like the canaries in the mine and the problems that face our community serve as indicators of more ominous problems we face statewide with our youth. The Task Group members recognize the importance and effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies that provide programs and activities that keep youth out of the judicial system and the costly alternatives of rehabilitation and treatment.

I urge you to pass this measure and refer it to the Finance Committee with a strong recommendation for funding. Mahalo!

KALIHI YOUTH GANG PREVENTION & INTERVENTION TASK FORCE

GRANTS IN AID REQUESTS: (Revised 2/17/2016)

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
<p>School/Neighborhood Counseling Program</p>	<p>ADULT FRIENDS FOR YOUTH</p>	<p>Not provided</p>	<p>GROUP COUNSELING PROGRAM: OAHU -Low Income, minority, high-risk youth gang members Central Middle, Farrington, Dole & Kalakaua</p>
<p>Student Anti-Bullying & Violence Convention</p>	<p>ADULT FRIENDS FOR YOUTH</p>	<p>Not provided</p>	<p>Implementation of two annual student Anti Bullying and Violence Convention One targets 4th & 5th graders and other targets 9th graders as well as 7th & 8th graders, as requested. Equips students with necessary skills to interrupt the cycle of bullying</p>
<p>11th Annual Aloha Youth Rugby 7's Tourn. & HiroBuilt Fitness</p>	<p>ADULT FRIENDS FOR YOUTH</p>	<p>Not provided</p>	<p>Augments funding for AFY's Rugby Tournament and HiroBuilt Fitness strength & conditioning program Participants are from all over the state and the mainland</p>
<p>Education and Skill Building for Truancy Prevention and Kalihi Palama Juvenile Assessment Center Youth and Families (New service) Collaboration with Kalihi YMCA</p>	<p>SUSANNAH WESLEY COMM. CTR.</p>	<p>\$164,538.</p>	<p>Community Based Outreach -Aggressive outreach and case-finding activities within the community is essential in connecting clients to appropriate services. Intake and Assessment Determine interest and eligibility for services. Referral Services. Determine the services that are needed for successful implementation. Follow -up/After Care services</p>

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
Continued	SWCC		<p>Positive Alternative Activities Develop/strengthen skills & talents -Activities focus on goal setting, career exploration, and post high educational opportunities</p> <p>Educational Development Activities Alternative Secondary School Services Sports, Fitness, and health Community Building & service Youth Leadership</p>
After School Program Expansion for Kalihi Palama Youth	Palama Settlement	\$49,806.	Provide youth in Kalihi and Palama Neighborhoods a safe and nurturing place to learn. Focus on low income, immigrant population, at-risk youth. Develop and improve reading, writing, literacy and math skills.
Kuhio Park Terrace Community Teen Program	Parents And Children Together (PACT)	\$181,428	To provide quality, evidence-based services to at-risk children and youth who live in Kuhio Park Terrace/ Kuhio Homes in Kalihi. Through this proposal, PACT will continue current basic youth center services (educational support, enrichment and recreation, arts and culture, and social/life skill development) and expand services to include a more substantial emphasis on STEM, technology and digital media that will provide opportunities for this population to develop 21 st century skills that are essential to future success.

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	AMOUNT REQUESTED	DESCRIPTION
HO'OPIKO AFTER SCHOOL PROJECT	YMCA OF HONOLULU	Not provided	No further information Contact Steksin Diopulos, Kalihi YMCA
SAFE SPACES, HEALTHY LIVES	KOKUA KALIHI VALLEY Contact Ashley Galacgac	Not provided	Weekly tennis, bicycling, malama aina, hula dn cultural storytelling activities. Community based approach to building young people's physical health and personal resilience. Nurturing youth as apprentices/leaders and strengthening Kalihi Valley's safety-net for families.
CITY/GIAs			
Comprehensive After school services	Parents and Children Together (PACT)	\$ 84,429. (CITY FUNDS)	After school services for underserved youth living in Puuwai Momi, an at-risk community. Target population 200 underserved youth, ages 7-18. Youth at-risk for educational failure and early participation in risky behavior.



TO: Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair San Buenaventura, and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)
DATE/LOCATION: February 18, 2016; 2:00 p.m., Conference Room 325

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1987 – RELATING TO YOUTH GANGS

We support the intent of HB 1987 – Relating to Youth Gangs. Gang membership in Hawaii continues to increase by the numbers, with a report in 2010 stating 129 street gangs involving 500 members across the state of Hawaii. Youth gangs have become an issue we have grown to tolerate in our culture. For troubled teens, it is a battle between peer-pressure, low self-esteem, and the unfortunate violence they have grown up witnessing. Our negligence to youth gangs would be failure to claim our duty in providing safe environments and promising futures for our keiki.

It is of crucial importance that we invest in organizations and programs that dedicate their services to bringing back the hope of a child's innocence. Parents And Children Together is just one of the many organizations who offer prevention and intervention programs to ensure healthy environments for children and families in Hawaii. It takes more than just resources alone to carry out success in this work, but the continuous support of community members and leaders who become role models for these high risk youth.

The positions of HB 1987 will provide solid foundations in helping youth recognize their potential in life. No longer shall their environments create their destinies for them, and limit their capabilities of what they could achieve. It is essential that every single one of our keiki are given the chance to appreciate their youth, and know how to stand for what they believe in. We support the passing of this bill.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 16 programs. Among its services are: early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 1987**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.