

FEB 02 2009

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS TO NETWORK AND COOPERATE TO
SUPPORT FOSTER FAMILIES IN HAWAII.

1 WHEREAS, children are our state's most precious resource,
2 making it our greatest interest to nurture and provide them with
3 the opportunities and resources they need to reach their highest
4 potential; and
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6 WHEREAS, according to the State of Hawaii Department of
7 Human Services (DHS), more than 4,000 children entered foster
8 care in Hawaii in 2006, which constitutes a significant decrease
9 from past years as new and innovative programs have been
10 developed to protect and serve our children and families better;
11 and
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13 WHEREAS, foster children come from all backgrounds and age
14 groups, from birth to age 18, and 45 percent of foster children
15 are of Hawaiian or part Hawaiian descent; and
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17 WHEREAS, children enter foster care for various reasons,
18 the most common of which are physical abuse, sexual abuse,
19 domestic violence, and parental drug use; and
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21 WHEREAS, we have a shared responsibility to serve the needs
22 of foster children and to support the foster families that
23 strive to provide these children with safe, healthy, and loving
24 homes; and
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26 WHEREAS, as of 2006, there were fewer than 2000 foster
27 homes, representing only a portion of homes that are needed; and
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29 WHEREAS, Kokua `Ohana, a foster care program that was the
30 result of a collaborative effort between the Partners in
31 Development Foundation and DHS, works with churches and
32 community organizations in the native Hawaiian community to
33 recruit, train, and support foster families through the general
34 licensing process, with the goal of striving for cultural
35 harmony within Hawaii's child welfare system by uniting



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1 churches, community organizations, and families to care for and
2 nurture Hawaii's foster keiki; and

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4 WHEREAS, Kokua `Ohana offers to help churches build a
5 foster family ministry, members of which recruit others to
6 become foster families, encourage others to become members of
7 the ministry, support other foster families, accept and
8 distribute donations, enjoy fellowship activities, mentor new
9 foster families, help with household projects, and provide
10 childcare; and

11
12 WHEREAS, Kokua `Ohana will train foster family ministry
13 members about foster care and develop an action plan to reach
14 the hearts of congregations, funnel community donations to
15 foster families in the church, help build relationships with
16 local social workers to improve communication and services
17 provided by the State, and provide support for prospective
18 foster parents throughout the general licensing process; and

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20 WHEREAS, the collaboration of faith-based organizations to
21 help our children in foster care in such a way would have far-
22 reaching benefits for society; now, therefore,

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24 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth
25 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2009,
26 that faith-based organizations in the state are urged to network
27 and cooperate to support foster families in Hawaii, such as by
28 forming foster family ministries; and

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30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
31 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Director of Human
32 Services, Director of Kokua `Ohana, Executive Director of Hawaii
33 Youth Services Network, and President of Family Programs Hawaii.

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36 OFFERED BY: *Theranne Chun Dalland*

