REQUESTING THE CONVENING OF A TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF DETERMINING THE CAUSES OF ELDERLY ABUSE, DETERMINING BEST PRACTICES, AND ESTABLISHING A SENIOR LEGAL HELP LINE.

WHEREAS, the United States Senate Special Committee on Aging has estimated that up to 5,000,000 adults each year are victims of neglect, exploitation, or other abuse; and

WHEREAS, other studies indicate that up to six per cent of the national population of older adults has experienced some type of abuse, neglect, or exploitation; and

WHEREAS, adult protective services are mandated for adult victims of abuse in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia; and

WHEREAS, results of a recent Elder Abuse Incidence Study shed light on a significant problem of elder abuse and neglect among elders living in their own homes who have gone largely unidentified and unnoticed; and

WHEREAS, the study noted that only one in five new incidents of abuse, neglect, or self-neglect are reported to adult protective services agencies; and

WHEREAS, here in Hawaii, adult protective services provide crisis intervention, investigation, and emergency services to dependent adults who are reported to be abused, neglected, or financially exploited by others or seriously endangered due to self-neglect; and

WHEREAS, there are just over 84,000 elders who are 75 years or older in Hawaii; and
WHEREAS, national estimates of the frequency of abuse towards this population range from five to ten per cent, which suggests that there may be 4,000 or more cases of abuse in Hawaii each year; and

WHEREAS, however, the Department of Human Services indicates that in 2006, it investigated 514 cases, which suggests a large gap between those receiving services and those possibly experiencing abuse; and

WHEREAS, according to the University of Hawaii Center on the Family, between 2000 and 2030, the number of adults in Hawaii who will be 60 years and older will increase by 93.8 per cent and those 85 years and older will increase by 174 per cent; this, in turn, will result in a small proportion of children and younger adults in relation to those 60 years and older; and

WHEREAS, there has also been concern regarding whether any changes to the current Adult Protective Services Law would result in an increased case load and consequential strain on case workers; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Human Services, Adult Protection Services is only available during regular business hours, which has been reduced by furloughs, and does not provide any legal assistance or provide assistance unless the person consents to a social worker's evaluation; and

WHEREAS, California has created a Senior Legal Hotline to provide seniors with fast, accurate advice on any legal subject, by phone and Internet; and

WHEREAS, the California Senior Legal Hotline is funded primarily through a federal grant, which mandates statewide coverage, however more funding would be needed to provide this coverage; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that the Executive Office on Aging is requested to convene a task force for the purpose of determining the causes
of increased elder abuse in Hawaii, the needs of elders, law
enforcement, and the community at large to determine the best
practices in preventative measures, and investigate the
development of a statewide Senior Legal Helpline established
with Federal Grants and non-profit organization funding; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be chaired by
the Executive Director for the Executive Office on Aging and
consist of the following members:

(1) The Director of the Department of Human Services;

(2) The police chiefs of each county, or their designees;

(3) The Executive Director of Legal Aid Society of Hawaii;

(4) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the
   Senate President;

(5) One member of the House of Representatives, to be
   appointed by the Speaker of the House of
   Representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the task force submit their
recommendations to the legislature no later than twenty days
prior to the convening of the 2011 Regular Session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director of the
Executive Office on Aging, the director of Human Services, the
police chiefs of each county, the Executive Director of Legal
Aid Society of Hawaii.

OFFERED BY:

[Signatures]
H.R. NO. 176

MAR 1 0 2010

Raj Bhansali

Kal Murph

Karen Anavia