WHEREAS, as a result of the work of the Joint Legislative Committee on Family Caregiving, Act 11, Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, established a Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force to assess and report on the needs and issues of grandparents raising grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, the final report generated by the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force found as a result of a March 2009 Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) Focus Group, that participants with grandchildren in custody of Child Protective Services (CPS), Department of Human Services (DHS), expressed common frustration with DHS case workers because grandparents may not have received enough information from DHS workers; and

WHEREAS, observations in the March 2009 GRG Focus Group show that:

(1) Grandparents have little or no understanding of laws that drive a CPS case and may misunderstand the role of a DHS case worker;

(2) Grandparents raising grandchildren often feel afraid, intimidated, helpless and angry;

(3) Many grandparents raising grandchildren do not seek help from DHS because they are afraid that "the system" will remove their grandchildren from their care;

(4) Some DHS case workers:

   (A) Do not respect cultural values related to the sacredness of the grandparent/grandchild relationship;
(B) Do not respect the senior as the grandparent with knowledge about the history of the child's family;

(C) Do not acknowledge a grandparent's right to have a view of the best interest of their grandchildren; and

(D) Do not provide the grandparent with emotional support; rather the grandparents reported distress in relations with some workers; and

(5) Many grandparents do not know about current laws and subsidies that are designed to help and protect them; 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 Department of Human Services is urged to provide orientation and additional training to increase the ability of DHS case workers to address the issues faced by grandparents who raise grandchildren, including increasing case workers' awareness about:

(1) Local cultural beliefs regarding the important roles of grandparents within the family structure, especially when grandchildren need care;

(2) What grandparents experience (fear, helplessness, and anger) when their grandchildren are taken into custody by Child Protective Services or placed in foster care, and there are rules for having contacts with their grandchildren; and

(3) Grandparents' need for clear explanations to understand guidelines for managing cases involving children in state custody who need foster care and a safe permanent home; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human Services is requested to submit a report to this body no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2011 Regular Session on the initiatives the Department has implemented to
increase the ability of DHS case workers to understand and
address the issues faced by grandparents who raise
grandchildren; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services, the
Director of the Executive Office on Aging, the County Executive
of the City and County of Honolulu Elderly Affairs Division, the
Coordinator for the Department of Health Foster Care Licensing
Unit, and the Administrator of the Social Services Division of
the Department of Human Services.

OFFERED BY: 

[Signatures]