

kim5 - Deborah

From: Claud [claud@hawaiiantel.net]
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To: WAM Testimony
Subject: HB2000 HD2, SD1

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Aloha Senator Mercado Kim and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee!

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on HB 2000 HD2, SD1, which I understand is being heard by your Committee on Wednesday, Mar. 31st, at 9:30.

I hope it is possible not to cut the Judiciary's budget anymore than it was already cut for FY 10, since those cuts –which led to cuts to the Judiciary's Center for Alternative Resolution, and through its POS Contracts, cuts to the six community Mediation Centers of Hawaii.- have already hurt too many people.

So I am particularly concerned about JUD601, which shows further cuts to the Judiciary's Administration section.

I have been a Mediator at the Mediation Center of Molokai since 1991, so I know from personal experience that the community Mediation Centers offer a user-friendly, cost-effective alternative to the Courts, which reduces their workload. And I am reminded daily how important of provision of mediation services is to people who help help.

One example: recently, my co-Mediator Malia and I worked with a young couple who both ended up in tears as they realized someone was finally actually trying to help them and their 2 year old daughter...the Mom has a restraining order against the Dad, but by the end of the session he agreed to take Parenting classes with his wife, and to go into couples therapy with her to try to save their marriage.

People like these need and deserve out help, but our little Mediation Center –like all the other Mediation Centers of Hawaii across the state- has already had to cut back on services due to the budget cuts we have already had.

Please keep the Judiciary's budget intact, so we can keep helping people who need help!

Mahalo and Aloha!

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HAWAII STATE SENATE
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATIVE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

DATE: Wednesday, March 31, 2010

TIME: 9:30AM

PLACE: Conference Room 211
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of HB 2318-Relating to PUBLIC HOUSING

Aloha Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui and members of the Ways and Means Committee

Thank you for hearing HB 2318 , a measure that will provide funding to house those sub-set of the homeless population- the chronically homeless or houseless. These are the individuals who are unfortunate to have mental illness, and those who choose to remain drug addicted.

I am Pastor George Noble, a clergy with a church in Waianae who care and advocate for the homeless but end up caring more for the above referenced type of homeless. They are the type of homeless who live on the beach, inside bushes, and under the bridges or freeways. They stay away from the traditional homeless shelters because of drug testing within homeless shelters. Most of our mentally ill homeless are also drug addicted as a result of self medication.

Although funding had been afforded to emergency and transitional homeless shelters, the providers of these services do not prefer to service these sub set of the population. They are not what we consider the low hanging fruit but rather to the contrary. They fear harm maybe from what have been done to the other shelter residents.

HB 2318 "Housing first" is a national best practice method of housing these subset of the homeless. It has been proven to work in eight cities in the mainland. By providing these chronically homeless individuals with shelter which correspond to the second highest priority in Maslow's theory on the hierarchy of needs, will promote stabilization in these individuals both mentally and physically which further makes them more sensible to therapy and education.

I believe that the nexus of this bill with its source of funding can be attributed back in biblical times. The rich had been look at to take care of the poor.

The impact of the chronically homeless is exponential in terms of economic decline of tourism, general perception that we do not care for our people, and the extra funding needed from moving them from park to park or cleaning the areas where they once lived.

By helping the chronically homeless, we therefore help ourselves. I pray for the passage of this bill.

JAN L. FRIED • American Sign Language/English Interpreter

• RID Certified-IC, CI, CT • Educator • Consultant •

30 March 2010

The Senate

Twenty-Fifth Legislature, 2010, State of Hawai'i

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair

Testimony in Support of H.B. 2000, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, Relating to the Judiciary

Aloha Senator Mercado Kim and Members:

I am writing in support of HB 2000, HD 2, SD1. As an American Sign Language/English interpreter in private practice, an interpreter trainer for the Judiciary and Tier 4 Hawai'i State Judiciary interpreter, I urge the Legislature to preserve the Judiciary's budget, which includes funding for the Office on Equality and Access to the Courts (OEAC) and the Court Interpreter Certification Program.

As Chief Justice Moon mentioned in his recent State of the Judiciary address, the OEAC and the Court Interpreter Certification Program have had a tremendous impact on the ability of people with limited English proficiency to receive due process. He also stressed the absolute importance of maintaining the Judiciary's budget at current levels so as not to jeopardize critically needed programs such as the OEAC's Interpreter Certification Program.

All one needs to do is to look back as recently as five years ago to see how incredibly underserved people with limited English proficiency were in Hawai'i's court system. At the time, there were no standards for spoken language interpreters working in court and often people with bilingual abilities with little or no understanding of the courts, let alone knowledge about the interpreting process, were hired to "interpret". How successful they were at this task and how well they served people who already are compromised regarding their understanding of the judicial system was often in question.

The OEAC's program under its highly qualified and capable staff, established qualifications, standards, a certification program, trainings and manage the services to ensure that all non-native users of English, including those who are Deaf or hard of hearing, could be linguistically present in court and participate in their own defense. This federal and state legal right will be in serious jeopardy if the OEAC's budget is cut. 169 Interpreters representing thirty-one different languages served the courts last year. Imagine if you used one of these languages, were called into court and denied a certified interpreter. Imagine the challenge and legal ramifications you could face without having access to the court's proceedings. Are these the types of scenarios you are willing to present to the thousands of people with limited English proficiency in court who have the right to qualified interpreters? Are you willing to allow the State to incur more costs when cases are dismissed and need to be retried due to the lack of qualified interpreters? Please take these questions into serious consideration as you make your decision.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit comments in support of this bill, and in particular, the retention of the current budget for the Judiciary and its programs.

Sincerely,

Jan L. Fried, CI and CT

Nationally Certified ASL/English Interpreter