

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 20 2013

RE: H.B. No. 395
H.D. 2
S.D. 1

Honorable Donna Mercado Kim
President of the Senate
Twenty-Seventh State Legislature
Regular Session of 2013
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred H.B. No. 395, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO YOUTH,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to address the need for access to safe places for youth in the State by:

- (1) Requiring the Office of Youth Services to coordinate a two-year Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program in partnership with private organizations, to coordinate a network that youth may access for safety and where they may obtain advice, guidance, programs, and services;
- (2) Establishing a Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program Coordinator position to, among other things, coordinate the safe places for youth network; and
- (3) Appropriating an unspecified amount of funds for the Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program Coordinator position and residential options for the pilot program.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Education, Office of Youth Services, Hawaii Youth Services Network, Adult Friends of Youth, IMUAlliance, Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery, Blueprint for Change, and sixty-



two individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Domestic Violence Action Center and one individual.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii is one of the safest and healthiest places in the nation for children and youth. However, many of Hawaii's youth are not immune to daily threats to their health and safety. Every year, youth run away from homes where abuse, neglect, and domestic violence are commonplace, or from schools where intolerable bullying becomes a major barrier to educational achievement. Without access to safe places, youth in these situations are vulnerable and may be victimized by predatory adults who lure them into consuming alcohol, substance abuse, or prostitution.

Your Committee has amended this measure by adding language to amend section 571-46, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to require the court, when awarding custody and visitation of a minor child, to consider the preference that custody should be awarded to both parents to ensure maximum continuing physical, emotional, and meaningful contact with both parents.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 395, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 395, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,


SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND, Chair



