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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO YOUTH GANG PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that there is a growing  
2 youth gang problem in Hawaii. This is evidenced by a statewide  
3 increase in gang membership as well as an increase in gang  
4 related graffiti, violence, and criminal activity. While ethnic  
5 and socio-economic profiles have changed over the past three  
6 decades, the dynamics and causes of gang activity remain the  
7 same.

8           Since youth gang members are primarily of school age, gang  
9 related activities may impact public housing where large numbers  
10 of youth reside. It is reported that gang members illicitly  
11 engage in criminal activity such as distribution and sale of  
12 illegal drugs and substances. It is also reported that members  
13 possess weapons and may be prone to violent behavior,  
14 endangering the safety and well-being of residents of public  
15 housing.

16           Gang delinquency tends to appear in communities where  
17 factors of poverty, adolescence, and social disorganization are



1 present. These are social, economic, and environmental factors  
2 that continue to plague public housing in Hawaii. Social  
3 disorganization is activated in public housing communities that  
4 have high rates of in-migration, in families that lack the  
5 skills or time to provide adolescents with the support and  
6 guidance they need, and in communities that fail to offer the  
7 types of activities that foster in adolescents a sense of  
8 challenge, purpose, and belonging, and that fail to recognize  
9 and effectively assist youths who are "at-risk". When youths  
10 turn to gangs for support and recognition, their destructive  
11 behavior is an expression of their desperate need for help from  
12 the social disorganization they are facing.

13 Clearly, the existence of gangs is but a symptom of a  
14 larger set of problems that our communities experience.  
15 Consequently, the legislature finds that a multi-pronged  
16 approach should be taken with programs that have expertise and  
17 experience to reach out and establish relationships and help  
18 promote education, self-esteem, individual growth and  
19 development, leadership, and responsibility. The legislature  
20 further finds that working within a public housing community



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1 allows programs, workers, residents, and volunteers to focus on  
2 specific targets and groups of youth.

3 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1 or so much thereof  
5 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the department  
6 of human services to develop prevention and intervention  
7 projects and programs targeting youth who reside in public  
8 housing who are at high risk of engaging in gang activities or  
9 joining gangs. The projects and programs shall be on-site or  
10 near sites where at-risk youth reside in public housing.

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
12 human services for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 3. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance of any  
14 appropriation made by this Act as of the close of business on  
15 June 30, 2018, shall lapse to the credit of the general fund.

16 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.  
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INTRODUCED BY:

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# H.B. NO. 1986

**Report Title:**

Youth Gang; Prevention and Intervention; Department of Human Services; Appropriation

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to the department of human services to target youths who live in public housing who are at risk of engaging in gang activities or joining gangs.

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