



The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Human Services

The Hon. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair

The Hon. Josh Green, Vice Chair

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

The Hon. Clayton Hee, Chair

The Hon. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Vice Chair

Monday, February 10, 2014

10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 016

By

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Deputy Chief Judge, Senior Family Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 2256, Relating to Juvenile Prostitution.

Purpose: Authorizes the establishment of a juvenile prostitution court pilot program.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the passage of Senate Bill No. 2256 that will create a specialty court as a pilot program to aid victimized and exploited juvenile prostitutes. Often, adult prostitutes, both female and male, come from a troubled past, originating from their youth. As adults, they remain victimized and trapped by the sub-culture of the street, by those who are controlling their activities, and lack of other skills and economic resources.

This bill seeks to provide care and aid at much earlier critical point when teenaged females and males first become trapped in this sub-culture. Youth who are runaways or who are pushed out often end up on the streets, vulnerable to exploitation by malevolent adults. Many teens in this situation will see these adults as friends, saviors, mentors, and lovers. The teens are relieved to have someone “take care” of them and some are frankly dazzled by the attention (that



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is often mistaken for love and affection), gifts, and money. Very quickly, these arrangements sour but often only after the trap has sprung.

The Judiciary welcomes the possibility of providing particular expertise in a court and a service provision program to better meet the needs of these teens. The Judiciary respectfully requests that any appropriation be in addition to the original Judiciary budget request contained in House Bill No. 1638 / Senate Bill No. 2084, and that this additional appropriation does not come with a corresponding reduction to any items already included in our base budget request.

Additionally, we wish to note some potential amendments to this bill.

1. We note that there should be a correction on page one, from line 11. It is more appropriate to state that the Chief Justice will select the assigned judge for this court.
2. Juveniles are referred to as "offenders" throughout this bill. It may be clearer to insert the word "juveniles" for "offenders." "Offender" is a term more appropriately applied to adults. Also, its use in this bill may be confusing since the juvenile population for this specialty court will be, in part, drawn from adult criminal cases.
3. We suggest deleting the word "licensed" when describing social workers in this bill since state employed social workers need not be licensed pursuant to statute.

In sum, we would be pleased to work with the Legislature in developing this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.