



The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Tuesday, April 3, 2018 10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

by

Lester Oshiro

Chief Court Administrator, Third Circuit

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 2277, H. D. 1, S. D. 1, Relating to Child Welfare Services.

Purpose: Establishes the East Hawai‘i Child Welfare Services Section Pilot Project within the Department of Human Services to increase staff and reduce caseloads in the East Hawai‘i Child Welfare Services Section. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the intent of House Bill No. 2277, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 Relating to Child Welfare Services and respectfully offers the following comments.

This bill proposes to appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services to establish a five-year pilot program in the East Hawai‘i Child Welfare Services Section to create an additional eight full-time equivalent (8.0 FTE) case managers and fifteen full-time equivalent (15.0 FTE) support staff positions for the pilot program. Creating these new positions will undoubtedly result in the filing of new cases, which may be due to their current backlogs. The increase in case filings will result in the necessary appointment of Guardians ad Litem (GAL) and court-appointed legal counsel for the minors and their parents.

GAL/attorney fees are based on the appointment of one (1) GAL for the minor, one (1) attorney for the mother and one (1) attorney for the father in each case. The cost for these appointments in the first year of the case is \$7,740 per case. With the addition of eight (8) new case workers, it is logical and foreseeable that there will be an increase in case filings. We conservatively expect that each new case worker would generate 3 cases due to backlogs or 24



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additional cases in the next budget period. Assuming this increase in caseload, we anticipate the need for \$185,760 to cover the costs of these new cases in the next budget period. Cases normally will continue for 3 to 4 years and with each year that passes, we would need additional funding to pay for the GAL and attorneys assigned in those cases.

The Judiciary respectfully requests that should this bill pass, additional funding for these added GAL/court-appointed legal counsel be appropriated for the Third Circuit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.