



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Monday, April 3, 2017 1:35 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 016

By

Judge R. Mark Browning

Senior Judge, Deputy Chief Judge

Family Court of the First Circuit

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 844, House Draft 1, Relating to Youth.

**Purpose:** Requires OYS to coordinate a two-year Safe Places for Youth Pilot Program.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports this bill that will offer a much needed service to homeless youth and that may be a pivotal moment for a youth to find a way back to healthy, life-affirming choices.

In the experience of the family court, young people on the streets are not usually there as a result of individual willful rebellion or bad intent. Some of these kids leave their families as a result of trauma experienced outside of the home or exposure to negative influences. Some of these kids come from families suffering from generations of dysfunction, violence, and substance abuse. This bill, like other Safe Places throughout the country will “broker” services to these young people non-judgmentally and with kindness and acceptance. The Office of Youth Services (OYS) is particularly well suited to administer such a program. It is, of course, crucial that the OYS receive adequate funding to implement the vision of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.