

FEBRUARY 24, 2023

# Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

## OYAH Community Stakeholders Convene at Kawaiiloa For the first time since 2021



(Above: left to right)  
LorMona Meredith,  
Leah Delos Santos,  
Toni Bissen, Shawn  
Kana'iaupuni, Venus  
Rosete-Medeiros.



At right), Carla Houser  
and Haumea Velasco

On February 24 OYAH stakeholders convened and reconnected for the first time in 15 months. The meeting created the opportunity to bring like-minded individuals together and to introduce the many arms that make up the umbrella of OYAH organizations. One of the focal points of the gathering was the importance of recognizing and gaining knowledge from individuals who work directly with Hawaii's vulnerable children, which was put into practice during forums and group sessions.



OYAH intern Leah Delos Santos spoke about the policy team's efforts at the capital during this year's legislative session. Leah elaborated on the process of creating OYAH policy priorities and how the influence and input from stakeholders affect the finalization of priorities. She emphasized the significance of incorporating youth perspectives into the advocacy process.

The OYAH policy interns have reviewed 3,132 bills introduced this session, identifying 197 pertaining to youth, mental health, restorative justice, incarceration, homelessness and other OYAH issues. She said that the policy team has testified at the state capital 24 times through February 24 have meetings scheduled with seven legislators from March 1 - 3. The policy interns meet every Monday to discuss priorities and strategize for effective advocacy.

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