

APRIL 28, 2023

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

OYAH Policy Priorities in the Legislature: Conference Committee Updates

On April 29, the OYAH policy team met at the capital to advocate to legislative conference committee members on OYAH policy priorities. The bills still alive were in need of an agreement between the house and the senate.

HB349 HD2 SD1 CD1:

Advocates have fought for years to establish a state judicial process for the emancipation of children in certain circumstances. This bill, introduced by Rep. Linda Ichiyama who worked closely with OYAH policy interns, was approved in conference committee on April 28 and will move to the House and Senate floor for final approval.

SB129 SD1 HD2:

Emergency shelter for youth has been a major push for OYAH this year and the policy team recently had the chance to speak with Representatives Tarnas and Mizuno about the bill and the need for no-cost emergency shelters. Yesterday, the bill was heard in conference committee and was in agreement between chairs, but unfortunately has not moved further in the process. A major disappointment, the advocates will seek meetings with the Dept. of Human Services and legislators following session to explore next steps.

HB68 HD1 SD1 CD1:

HB68 has fortunately made it through conference committee meetings. The OYAH policy team has been consistently advocating for and HB68 and the creation of statewide pretrial justice data reporting and collection system for some time with the help of Dr. Erin Harbinson from the CJRI.



House Human Services Chair John Mizuno, Vice Speaker Greggor Ilagan, OYAH policy advocate Melissa Pavlicek and Rep. Terez Amato cheer the approval of House Bill 349.

OYAH Policy Post-Session Summer Plans

The OYAH Policy Team hopes to conduct a series of policy clinics for attorneys in Hawaii throughout the course of the summer. The primary objective of these clinics is to provide attorneys with comprehensive information on the various emancipation options that are available to youth within the state. By keeping attorneys informed and up-to-date on emancipation policies and procedures, the OYAH Policy Team hopes to better equip them to serve the youth of Hawaii and take advantage of the tools that are available. In addition, we hope to continue meeting with various legislators to spread the goals of OYAH and find common ground on policy priorities.