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Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

Policy Intern Insights: Partnerships are Important

By OYAH Policy Intern
Sydney Story

Over the past three years, we as Policy Interns have been fortunate to be integrated into partnerships between various adjudicative and administrative bodies. We've been able to witness firsthand the successes of meaningful collaboration, whether that be the passing of a bill for youth emancipation or the establishment of a judicial diversion program for youth.

The legislature and its associated processes can appear complex and frustrating. In reality, it's all about relationships. Partnerships. Being willing to work across agencies and with experts who engage with the affected community every day. One of the most inspiring aspects of this work has been the level of commitment of both individuals and organizations to the success of opportunity youth.

For more information about the OYAH policy initiative, the work of the policy interns, and the state legislature, please visit www.oyahpolicy.com

Hawai'i State Legislature Opened with New Leaders



The 2025 legislative session officially opened on January 15th, and constituents flooded the capitol to celebrate the start of the new session. Many advocacy groups were present. OYAH Policy Initiative advocates Melissa Pavlicek (left) and Sydney Story (right) met

met key leaders in advancing OYAH efforts. Senator San Buenaventura (center, above) was instrumental in passing OYAH's youth right to housing bill in 2024, and Representative Perruso (below left) is a longtime supporter of OYAH and its efforts.

OYAH 2025 Legislative Priorities

OYAH interns and supervisors plan to gather together in the coming weeks and identify top priorities for the upcoming session. Amidst the approximate 3,000 bills introduced, Representative Tarnas has agreed to introduce a bill related to youth fees and fines, a bill that has been in the works for a number of years in collaboration with the Juvenile Justice State Advisory Council and the Berkeley Law Institute.



Bills related to criminal record expungement, reducing homelessness, the foster care system, truancy, sex trafficking, and more will be considered for support by OYAH advocates.