

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

OYAH policy interns monitor a variety of policy issues that may relate to youth incarceration. This year, the legislature is considering many immigration bills, including HB 1349 and SB 816 which survived the legislature's cross over deadline.

House Bill 1349, HD1

Accessible, affordable, and equitable high-quality healthcare is an essential factor of public health and wellness. However, one's immigration status may deny access to affordable health care through the Medicaid Children's Health Insurance Program, and Affordable Care Act. Low-income, immigrant pregnant persons and their children experience life-threatening situations at higher rates due to their inability to access prenatal care. If more income-qualified pregnant persons are given access to health insurance coverage, resident immigrants are given more access to healthcare, reducing their barriers.

Purpose: this bill appropriates funds to DHS to authorize Medicaid coverage through the children's health insurance program to income-qualified pregnant persons and children regardless of immigration status.

Supporters: This bill has been supported by: the Hawai'i County Council; Indivisible Hawai'i Healthcare Team; Ka Ohana O Na Pua; Save Medicaid Hawaii; Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights; AlohaCare; Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights; Hawai'i Women Lawyers; and numerous individuals. One testifier noted that, "planned regular health care is far more kind and respectful to everyone, as well as more cost-effective than emergency interventions, which often become the only option for uninsured families."

Opponents: Several individuals who opposed the bill stated that they oppose paying for healthcare insurance for anyone other than legal residents.



Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair, and Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair, of the House Human Services Committee consider testimony on HB 1349.

Senate Bill 816 SD2

Foreign-born residents facing deportation or immigration-related proceedings, and DACA immigrants, who are most vulnerable, experience difficulty navigating complex immigration proceedings without [government-funded] or general legal representation because of language barriers, financial constraints, and lack of accessible legal resources. Access to legal representation, however, will help these individuals achieve more favorable outcomes.

Purpose: this bill would establish a program to provide access to legal representation to individuals in the State facing immigration-related proceedings in immigration court to ensure due process and promote family unity, community stability, and economic security.



Supporters: This bill was supported by the Judiciary, William S. Richardson School of Law Refugee and Immigration Clinic, Indivisible Hawaii Statewide Network, Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission, Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus, Oahu Filipino Community Council, ACLU Hawaii, UNITE HERE Local 5, Pride at Work - Hawaii, the Legal Clinic, Catholic Charities Hawai'i, Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights, Hawai'i Coalition for Immigrant Rights, A.L.O.H.A. Latinos, Imua Alliance, Save Medicaid Hawai'i, COFACAN, League of Women Voters of Hawai'i, and numerous individuals.

Opponents: this bill was opposed by the Aloha Freedom Coalition and several individuals.