

February 20, 2024

House Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing Time: 9:46 AM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 211

Re: SB3139 SD1, RELATING TO CRISIS INTERVENTION

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi hui, we are writing in **strong support** of SB3139 SD1, relating to crisis intervention. This bill Establishes a Crisis Intervention and Diversion Services Program within the Department of Health to expand existing services to divert those with mental health issues to appropriate health care services. This bill also Defines "mental health emergency worker," declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded, and makes an appropriation for the crisis intervention and diversion program.

Expanding the availability of services and resources for individuals suffering from mental health emergencies is a strong alternative to the traditional method of subjecting these individuals to the judicial system. By working directly with community support networks and mental health professionals, the state can ensure that those in need receive the proper care and support. Additionally, designating the position of “mental health emergency worker” further carves out a niche to ensure mental health issues are properly addressed by experienced and trained professionals.

Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

**Please support SB3139 SD1.**

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