

**OPPORTUNITY  
YOUTH  
ACTION HUI**

27 January 2022

Senate Committee on Human Services

Hearing Time: 03:10 p.m.

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 2481, Relating to Youth Crisis Centers

Aloha mai e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **strong support** of SB 2481, relating to youth crisis centers. This measure would establish the Youth Crisis Center Branch of the Office of Youth Services and the position of Administrator of the Youth Crisis Branch of the Office of Youth Services. Appropriates moneys.

This bill would address and offer aid to the youth of Hawai'i who struggle with mental health and abuse. Research shows that Native Hawaiians suffer from alarming rates of negative mental health associated risk factors and outcomes. Youth suicide ideation, attempt and death rates are highest among Native Hawaiians. Furthermore, Native Hawaiian keiki are over-represented as victims of abuse and neglect (OHA). We believe this measure is a pivotal step in the effort to advance mental health and abuse victim support for Native Hawaiian youth.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is a collaboration of organizations and individual 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 SB 2481.**