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3 February 2022

Senate Committee on Human Services

Hearing Time: 3:00 p.m.

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 2878, Relating to Children

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

We are writing in **support** of SB 2878, relating to children. This measure allows a minor who has reached the age of sixteen years to petition the family court for a declaration of emancipation. It requires the court to take certain actions regarding investigation of the petition, appointment of a guardian ad litem and legal counsel for the petitioning minor, and the findings necessary to grant the petition. Thank you for introducing and hearing this bill.

The organizations and individuals who comprise the Opportunity Youth Action Hui work with and for youth and young adults, many of whom lack connections to stable parents or families and would benefit from emancipation so that they can seek the needed resources for food, shelter, and healthcare services. Emancipation allows a youth to be freed from the custody and control of their parents in certain appropriate circumstances, often a last resort, and to have many of the rights and responsibilities of an adult. We believe this measure is important step toward meeting the needs of some youth in our community.

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 2878.**

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