

Committee: House Human Services

Hearing Time: 8:30 a.m., February 7, 2023

Location: State Capitol

Re: HB 438, Relating to Youth Programs

Aloha e Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Amato and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **support** of HB 438, Relating to Youth Programs.

This bill requires appropriates funds and establishes one Pacific Youth Programs coordinator position within the Department of Human Services Office of Youth Services.

Our organizations and the individuals in them work collaboratively with the Department of Human Services Office of Youth Services and have a shared vision for supporting youth and reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system. We believe that this measure is an important step toward providing the office with necessary additional resources.

Our collective, the Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi (OYAH), works to support young people under age 25 who are disconnected from school and work, referred to as “opportunity youth.” This developmental time period is extremely consequential to the individual growth and overall life chances of our children. We support this measure.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi hui is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to 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 HB 438.**