

Committee: House Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Hearing Time: 2:00 p.m., February 7, 2023

Location: State Capitol

Re: HB 829, Relating to Court-Appointed Attorneys

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **support** of HB 829, Relating to Court-Appointed Attorneys.

This bill requires the court to appoint counsel to indigent parents upon the filing of a petition for custody or family supervision and make every effort to do so at the first hearing attended by the parents.

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 believe that this measure is important to ensuring that legal counsel is provided to indigent parents in a timely manner and under appropriate circumstances.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi hui 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 HB 829.**