

JANUARY 21, 2022

OPPORTUNITY YOUTH ACTION HUI POLICY PRIORITIES

The second cohort of college student advocates has been engaged by members of the Opportunity Youth Action Hui to advance initiatives in support of the hui member organizations, including Native Hawaiian equity in the criminal justice system, workforce training and development, trauma-informed care, and the education, mental health and well-being of youth.

State Legislators Listen, Learn & Respond to Opportunity Youth Action Hui Priorities



Left to right: State Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Representative Patrick Branco, Representative Sylvia Luke

The Hawai'i legislature opened the second year of its biennium session on January 19. The OYAH members prepared for the session by meeting with legislators, sharing the Hui's priorities, and asking legislators to introduce and support legislation. State Senator Joy San Buenaventura, chair of the Senate Human Resources Committee, told OYAH advocates that she plans to reintroduce a measure to allow for the emancipation of minors. Senator San Buenaventura previously supported a measure that would allow a minor who has reached the age of sixteen to petition the family court for emancipation. The bill will be supported by OYAH and it also provides that the courts will take certain actions regarding investigation of an emancipation petition, appointment of legal counsel and a guardian ad litem for the petitioning minor.

Advocates also met with Rep. Patrick Branco who represents the Kailua area near where the Kawaihoa Youth Correctional Facility is located and Representative Sylvia Luke who chairs the powerful House Finance Committee.

Introducing OYAH's 2022 Policy Externs

University of Hawai'i political science undergraduate Leah Delos Santos (right, pictured below) was selected as a returning extern after serving in the OYAH's Policy Externship initial cohort in 2021. She is a 2021 graduate of Kamehameha Schools. Leah is joined by Chaminade University undergraduate Lyla Gonsalves who is majoring in environmental studies with a strong interest in public policy development. Her goals are to learn more about the state legislature and advocate for Native Hawaiian equity in the criminal justice system.

