

JUNE 30, 2023

Opportunity Youth Action Hawai'i Policy Initiative

Youth Emancipation Bill Signed by Governor



(L to R: Venus Rosete-Medeiros from Hale Kipa, Melissa Pavlicek, Leah Delos Santos, Governor Josh Green, Carla Houser from RYSE, and Judith Clark from Hawai'i Youth Services Network)

On June 14th, OYAH Policy Team members Melissa Pavlicek and Leah Delos Santos, along with other OYAH members and community leaders, attended Governor Josh Green's official bill signing of multiple measures regarding youth and child welfare services and programs. On this agenda was one of OYAH's high priority bills, HB 349, relating to youth emancipation. Youth who are at least 16 years of age can now petition the court for legal emancipation from their parents for various reasons, including signing contracts and leases, suing or being sued in their own name, retaining their personal earnings, earning a living, filing their own taxes, health care and medical autonomy, obtaining a driver's license, marrying, registering for school, estate management, parental rights, and more. OYAH's policy team members are beyond excited about this success, and we are currently in the planning process for different ways we can make our community aware of this resource that could help many youth across the state.

In an effort to increase awareness about the OYAH Policy Initiative, policy intern Leah Delos Santos has designed and produced an informational brochure and the policy interns are exploring hosting a possible educational table at the University of Hawai'i Law School soon.



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