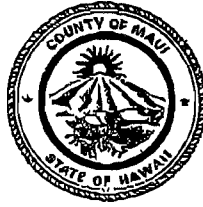


ALAN M. ARAKAWA
Mayor



DAVELYNN M. TENGAN
Prosecuting Attorney

BENJAMIN M. ACOB
First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

LENA LORENZO
Director

Counselors
PAULA HEISKELL
RUTH BALDERAS
GERALD POBLETE
JENNA SMITH

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE DIVISION**

150 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
PHONE (808) 270-7695 • FAX (808) 270-6188

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2433
Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Thursday, February 9, 2006
Conference Room 225 at 2:45 p.m.**

To: The Honorable Colleen Hanabusa, Chair
The Honorable Clayton Hee, Vice Chair

From: Lena Lorenzo, Director
Victim/Witness Assistance Division
Department of the Prosecuting Attorney
County of Maui

We are asking for your support of SB 2433 to appropriate funds for a grant-in-aid to the Prosecuting Attorney's office of each county for the career prosecution units and the victim/witness assistance programs. The Maui Victim/Witness Assistance Division has been providing vital services to crime victims and witnesses and their families since its inception in 1982. The services provided include, but not limited to, crisis and short-term counseling, referral for financial assistance and social services, case information and notification, preparation for court testimony, court accompaniment, explanation of the judicial system, return witness program for visitors, victim impact statement and advocacy for victims' rights.

Despite the continued demand for services, the victim/witness fund has been steadily declining since 1995. Between fiscal year 1995 and the current fiscal year 2006, funds for the Maui Victim/Witness have been cut from \$176,801 to \$99,233, a reduction of 44%. The combination of increases in bargaining unit salary and fringe benefits result in less money going to actually pay for the position incumbents. We urge you to appropriate the grant-in-aid fund so that there is no elimination of present positions or disruption in services currently being provided to victims of crime. The impact of such an action, if it is done, will be immediate and adverse to both victims and successful prosecution. Prosecution will be less effective because it will cut off a part of the crime-fighting arm and victims will be left to fend for themselves as they navigate their way in the maze of the criminal justice system. Not having adequate funding for the program that provides the much-needed services would obliterate the many years it has taken to develop services for crime victims.