



THE SEX ABUSE TREATMENT CENTER

A Program of Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women & Children

Date: February 9, 2006

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To: The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair IGA
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair IGA
Members of the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs

The Honorable Colleen Hanabusa, Chair JHW
The Honorable Clayton Hee, Vice Chair JHW
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

From: Adriana Ramelli, Director
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children

RE: Support for SB 2433
Making Appropriations for Career Criminal Prosecution Units and
Victim Witness Assistance Programs

Good afternoon Senators and Committee Members. My name is Adriana Ramelli and I am the Director of the Sex Abuse Treatment Center (SATC), a program of the Kapi'olani Medical Center for Women and Children, an affiliate of Hawaii Pacific Health.

The SATC strongly supports SB 2433 to appropriate funds to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office in each county for the Career Criminal Prosecution Units and Victim Witness Assistance Programs (VWAP).

The SATC has partnered with the Honolulu VWAP for many years to ensure that sexual assault victims receive the help they need when interfacing with the criminal justice system. The VWAP provides the vital services of educating and counseling victims on the legal system and their rights as victims, and keeps victims informed on various court proceedings and the status of their case. The SATC also relies on the staff of the VWAP to accompany our clients to court. Without these services, victims of sexual assault will hesitate to face the rigorous procedures of the judicial system.

We are concerned that funding invested by the state in Victim Witness Assistance Programs has dramatically declined (by over 30%) since 1995. SB 2433 is an attempt to adequately fund these vital programs. Those of us at SATC have experienced first hand how their services have made a difference in the shattered lives of many adults and children traumatized by sexual violence. I urge you to pass SB 2433.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.