



HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

To: Senator Patrick J. Leahy, Vermont, Chairman
Senator Mazie Hirono, Hawaii
COMMITTEE of the JUDICIARY

From: Marci Lopes, Executive Director
Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Hearing Date and Time: Thursday, October 16, 2014; 10:00 a.m.

Place: Conference room 325

RE: Accessing Support: How the Violence Against Women Act Serves Hawaii
Military Families Experiencing Domestic Violence.

Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony about the importance of FVPSA and VAWA programs and funding for our Hawaiian Islands. I am the Executive Director for the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV). We represent a membership of 22 domestic violence service providers statewide, and the many victims and survivors they help with their critical services. Our mission is to engage communities and organizations to end domestic violence through education, advocacy, and action for social justice.

I am speaking today about some of the lifesaving services provided to residents of Hawaii because of the existence of VAWA and FVPSA. The Island of Oahu reported the greatest impact on the demands for their services being accessed by the military. On the Island of Oahu service provider's aided families from the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, as well as the Air National Guard and the Army Reserves. Services are not only accessed by legal military dependents, they are also accessed by intimate partners who are not legally married to the service members, and sometimes by their adult children, and extended family members who were living in the home of the service member.

Since its passage in 1984 the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) has remained the only direct federal funding source for shelter programs. FVPSA currently funds 9 domestic violence emergency shelters statewide.

Oahu-4 Domestic Violence emergency shelters

- 2 Operated by Child and Family Service- Honolulu & Leeward
- 1 Operated by Parents and Children Together- Kaneohe
- 1 Operated by Windward Spouse Abuse Shelter- Kailua

Hawaii Island-2 shelters operated by Child and Family Service- Hilo & Kona

Kauai- 1 shelter operated by the YWCA

Maui- 1 shelter operated by Women Helping Women

Molokai- 1 shelter operated by the Molokai Community Services Council Hale Ho'omalu

Shelter Utilization Chart 2013

PROGRAM	CLIENTS SERVED					BED DAYS				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
CFS Honolulu	39	66	36	63	204	1045	2419	1720	1214	6398
CFS Leeward	87	45	69	50	251	1903	2114	1829	1690	7536
PACT Kaneohe	55	41	38	37	171	1900	1755	1621	1610	6886
WSAS Kailua	35	29	14	25	103	799	509	498	502	2308
YWCA Kauai	42	24	26	27	119	685	766	828	830	3109
WHW Maui	81	57	44	49	231	1646	801	1949	2041	6437
Molokai CSC	57	8	9	20	94	314	158	122	145	739
CFS West HI	44	43	48	54	189	965	1267	1503	1576	5311
CFS East HI	69	88	73	92	322	1556	1575	1595	1130	5856
TOTAL STATEWIDE	509	401	357	417	1684	10813	11364	11665	10738	44580

There is a Military Shelter available on Oahu, but it is not staffed. Active duty or spouses can access the shelter after contacting the military crisis line and getting a referral from a military victim advocate. Victims are only allowed to stay two weeks. If additional weeks are needed, the advocate must request an additional two weeks from the chain of command. Oahu service providers have shared that many military victims prefer to access local service provider shelters because they have staff available 24-7, they can stay 90 days, and they do not trust the military restricted and unrestricted reporting levels. Victims have also reported they are fearful that the perpetrators chain of command will be able to keep them safe, and ensure that her abuser will be held accountable.

When events occur off base there are jurisdiction challenges. If the Honolulu Police Department makes a report because the event took place off base, victims and perpetrators can choose to access services off base. If the Hawaii judicial system is involved they can also mandate military personnel to batter interventions programs (BIP). There are two service providers on Oahu that are contracted with the Judiciary to provide BIP services. Child and Family Service, and the Parents And Children Together Family Peace Center. It was also reported by our membership that some military active duty self-refer for services off base to avoid their employer knowing they have a problem, and out of fear that it would have a negative impact on their career if their command knew of their problem. The Judiciary contracted programs follow the Hawaii Batter Intervention Standards and require 39 weeks to complete services. If an incident occurs on base a victims have the choice to access services on or off base.

In Hawaii if a victim with children files a TRO, a case is generated to Child Welfare Services. If Child Welfare Services becomes involved in the military family's case, they can also receive a referral to the 3 of the Oahu based domestic violence service providers listed below for victim support groups, and victim advocacy.

- Child And Family Services-for Leeward Oahu
- Domestic Violence Action Center- for Central Oahu
- Parents And Children Together Puuhonoua for Windward Oahu

If a military dependent child is in need of counseling services they can access the Parents And Children Together Family Peace Center- Haupoa Unit. The military does not have any therapeutic groups for children at this time. Individual and family counseling is available on some base facilities.

Because of the lack of affordable housing, and the inventory of housing in the open market, many victims return to their abusers, or become homeless as a result of the violence they have experienced in their homes. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) provides much needed **Transitional Housing** programs on our Islands, but this is still not enough. 3 Islands in this state benefit from the Transitional Housing program.

Oahu-

Child And Family Service- For victims and their children

Parents And Children Together Lehua Transition Home- 8 single women, no children

Maui-

Women Helping Women-For victims and their children

Hawaii Island-

Child And Family Service- For victims and their children

Oahu also receives Safe **Havens** money for a supervised visitation Center on Oahu. Visitation centers operate to keep children and victims safe while families are going through the TRO process, a custody dispute, or a highly conflicted divorce. If visitation is not handled properly it puts children at risk for being abused, kidnapped, or further harm to the custodial parent. The Parents And Children Together Family Visitation Center has been in operation since 1994, and serves over 250 families and provides over 3,000 visits per year. Many military families access this service because it is the only service of its type on the island of Oahu. The center currently has a waiting list, and families are only allowed one 90 minute visit with their children per week. This is a helpful service to military families because they are able to provide phone call visits for family members who are deployed or are out of state.

HSCADV operates a program called Flight to Freedom. If a victim is working with one of our 22 member programs and is in imminent danger we will assist with the purchase of a ticket to fly her to safety. Many military victims access this service because they are so geographically isolated in Hawaii, and have no family or friends nearby. Victims have reported that they have limited resources, and they need to leave the Islands quickly because their life is in danger. This service is also accessed by intimate partners who are not married to the service member, and also family members who are not listed as dependents.

There continues to be great need for all of these services across the Island of Oahu. On September 17th, 2013 Hawaii participated in a 24 hour survey and identified, 575 adults and children received assistance and services, including individual counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups in Hawaii. Unfortunately, on the very same day, there were 45 unmet requests for services in our state due to a critical shortage of funds and staff (National Network to End Domestic Violence Census 2013). In this last quarter of 2014, 22 member programs reported an increase in demand for their services. Funding shortages have created greater vulnerabilities in the network of services which survivors need for their safety, self-sufficiency and to live lives free from violence.

Respectfully,

The Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
810 Richards Street, Suite 960
Honolulu, HI 96813
PH: (808) 832-9316