

EDB Committee

From: Galon, Kara K. <kara.galon@doh.hawaii.gov>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 4:08 PM
To: EDB Committee; Keani N. Rawlins; Kelly King
Subject: Testimonial for CARES Act Monies
Attachments: Testimonial letter to CARES to County Committee 9-10-20 K. Galon.docx

Please see attached letter.

Mahalo,

K. Ka`ūlani Galon

Child & Youth Program Specialist IV
Maui District Health Office
Family Health Services Division
54 N. High Street, Room 415
Wailuku, HI 96793
808-984-8290
808-984-2136
kara.galon@doh.hawaii.gov
Website: <http://hawaii.gov/health>

Ka`iulani Galon
PO BOX 1303
Wailuku, HI 96793
808-870-1852

September 10, 2020

Position: Use Federal Covid-19 Relief Funds to support Maui County families

Dear Committee Chair Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Vice-Chair Kelly Takaya King, and Committee Members:

My name is Ka`iulani Galon and I am a registered voter who lives in Wailuku, HI 96793. I am writing to you as a private citizen and my work as a Hawaii State Department of Health Family Health Services employee informs my testimony. In my work, community connections and close family, I have seen first-hand the devastating effects of this pandemic in Maui County.

I have two examples to share. One example is that I have been approached multiple times by parents looking for support for their grade school children who are not responding well to their parent now being their teacher too. This in addition, to the days they do need to be at work, their child being unsupervised and feeling unsafe. There were no true resources I could offer either mom aside from compassion or emotional support. Now that we are becoming more aware of needs this pandemic is presenting, our funds need to be allocated toward supportive non-profits who can remedy this need. My second example is from a mom group I help to conduct every week over zoom. Their only connection to developmental and social emotional support for their children below age 5 are the Early Childhood programs provided through PIDF-Tutu and Me, KoKA PAT, MFSS EHS and MEO HS virtually. With all we know about the crucial years of childhood development being from birth to 5, a new and more concentrated look needs to be considered for our young keiki. Without these community non-profit supports which helped us collectively create this group, our parents of young ones would be truly isolated. The devastating ripple effect on our future work force and success of the next generation will be caused by the lack of developmental needs being met, caregiver stress that can lead to negative coping strategies exacerbating the problem, and trauma from the isolation and lack of effective supports are real issues that cannot be ignored.

I know that Hawai'i must spend about \$320 million in federal funds by December 30, 2020. I want Maui County to request and use some of that money to support families. Some of the most pressing needs I see are:

- A lack of affordable, accessible childcare for parents who are doing their best to contribute to the work force
- A lack of focus on early childhood needs in our community to support families who need to think of basic needs on top of the developmental supports to set their child up for future success in school and career.

- A need for help with elementary and high-school-age children who are participating in distance learning through DOE with the constant supervision need as parents attempt to work from home
- Stable, affordable housing without facing a big bill of past rent or past mortgage payments due when the emergency protections and housing assistance funds end
- Cash in families' pockets so they can pay for their families' basic needs
- Food shortages due to lack of local sustainable farm to table support
- Nonprofits serving families are facing cuts in their state contracts and are being asked to serve more families in new ways with fewer resources—this is unsustainable—nonprofits need financial help

In addition to requesting your help in spending the federal money on Maui, please make the following information public on the county website:

- How much federal and state money has been allocated for Maui County because of the pandemic
- How much of that has been spent and what it has been spent on
- What the plans are for any remaining amounts
- Who is informing the County's decisions about these funds, and the best ways for families to get involved in the process.

Please continue to hold public meetings on this topic and make all documents related to these issues accessible to the public.

Thank you for your service to the County and your attention to my testimony.

Sincerely,

Ka`iulani Galon