



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL AND HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR COMMENT
REGARDING SETTLEMENT OF FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS LAWSUITS**

HONOLULU – Attorney General Doug Chin and Human Services Director Rachael Wong announced today the resolution of multiple class action lawsuits regarding state foster care payments.

In December 2013, a group of licensed foster parents – also known as resource families – filed a federal lawsuit asserting that the amount the State pays to resource families to cover the costs of caring for foster children was inadequate. A related lawsuit was later filed in state court. Prior to 2014 the basic board rate paid to resource families had not been raised since 1990, but was raised in 2014 following a 2013 DHS review process. Subject to federal and state court approval and approval of funding by the state legislature, the parties agreed on new board rates starting in the 2017-2018 fiscal year and also agreed on a methodology DHS would use to review those rates in the future.

Attorney General Chin said, “The settlement between DHS and the Plaintiffs ends years of litigation in both state and federal court and demonstrates that parties can work together on investing in the health and well-being of children and families.”

Director Wong said, "Our children and families are core to the state's 'Ohana Nui (*extended family*) strategy. This agreement confirms our shared priority to invest in keiki and their families—biological, foster, hanai, or other—and provide them with resources and support to grow in healthy environments and homes. As Governor Ige often says, 'This is all about changing the trajectory of future generations' lives.'"

Under the settlement, the new monthly board rates provided to resource families in the next fiscal year would be: ages 0-5: \$649; ages 6-11: \$742; and ages 12+: \$776. Additionally, the annual clothing allowance starting next fiscal year would be: ages 0-5: \$810; ages 6-11: \$822; and ages 12+: \$1026. Members of the state lawsuit settlement class would receive an amount equal to \$35 per month, for the time period July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, prorated to actual days of care provided for each child in their care.

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The board rate covers some of the additional costs that the foster child brings to a resource family's home during placement, including the cost of food, additional utilities, wear and tear on household items, school supplies, personal incidentals, and local travel. In addition to the basic board rate, many other payments and benefits support foster children and resource families, including: an annual clothing allowance; free medical insurance; free school meals; baby formula and food subsidies through WIC; certain mileage reimbursements; free bus passes where needed; child care subsidies; free access to the DOE's afterschool A+ program; free access to the City and County of Honolulu's Summer Fun program; activity fees; free resource caregiver trainings, support groups, and a help line; liability insurance; respite care funds; and private donations for enhancements such as camps.

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