**HAWAI`I STATE - COMMISSION ON FATHERHOOD (HS-COF)**

**Friday, March 7, 2025**

**Time:  10:00 AM**

**Location**: Queen Liliuokalani Building, 1390 Miller St, Conference Room 2F, Honolulu

Virtual access to meeting via **Zoom** - Meeting ID #**876 5720 3038** / Password: **Fathers**

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87657203038?pwd=MlZOejU3VS9iRWVwNG1ZRWhLM1ZpQT09

Zoom waiting room will be open 5-15 minutes prior to meeting start time.

**Meeting Minutes**

**Recorded Meeting Link:**

**Meeting Call to Order: 10:03 AM**

**MISSION Statement: read by Commissioner Esmond (20:10-20:33)**

**[From Chapter 577E, Hawaii Revised Statutes] The mission of the Hawaii State - Commission on Fatherhood (HS-COF) is to promote healthy family relationships by emphasizing the importance of fathers in the lives of their children. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to state agencies and makes recommendations on programs, services, contracts, policies and laws relating to children and families.**

**I. Rollcall, Introductions and Updates (0:00-20:04):**

**Commissioners Present (in order of seniority):**

(All Present from 10:03am-12:00pm except Commissioner Cardines [10:03am-11:50pm])

* Chair Jeff Esmond (Oahu)
* Alan Sunio (Hawai’i Coalition for Dads)
* Allen Cardines (Oahu) (11:50)
* Brian Alston (Kauai)
* Marty Oliphant, Vice-Chair (Oahu)
* Neel Chauhan (Oahu)
* Mark Augustine (Maui) – Recently Appointed, but Oath of Office not yet taken.

Note from Chair:  Although Mark Augustine had received his appointment prior to this meeting, he had not yet taken his Oath of Office. For the purpose of these minutes, he has been removed from quorum counts and votes. Quorum was not affected.  No votes were affected.

**Ex-officio(s) or their designees (non-voting members) Present:**

* Kristen Takushi, Jon Kimura, Devyn Goo, *Director of Human Services*
* Tommy Johnson, *Director of Corrections and Rehabilitation*

**Deputy Attorneys General Sunshine Law Monitors:**

Erin Yamashiro (AG - Commission Counsel, O`ahu)

Lili Young (AG – Commission Counsel, O’ahu)

**Guests:**

Kim Krell (PARENTING, Inc.)

Laurie Dalton (PARENTING, Inc.)

Juliet Begley (representative from Senator San Buenaventura’s office)

Kawika Mattos

Laurel Johnson

Amanda Stevens (DHS Public Information Officer)

**II. Community shares or concerns (20:34-21:47)**

1. Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
	1. *This agenda has no item II a.*
2. Commissioner Updates
3. Commissioner Esmond shares about the [2025 Keiki Rainbow Run](https://runsignup.com/Race/HI/Honolulu/KeikiRainbowRun2023), an event that gives back to elementary schools on Oahu.

**III. Current Fiscal Year Initiatives – Part 1 (Vote) (21:48-50:34)**

* 1. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
		1. *This agenda has no item III, a.*

b. Annual Awards – marketing, outreach, press release and updates

i. Press Releases – Guest Speaker – Amanda Stevens, DHS Public Information Officer

 Commissioner Esmond shares that the deadline is April 16 and is working with

Amanda Stevens, DHS Public Information Officer, to get press release on the awards. Amanda Stevens suggests looking at an editorial calendar with a list of press release topic examples such as wins in the legislation related to COF, National Single Parent Day, news relating to parenthood. Commissioner Esmond asks how press release works and Amanda Stevens answers that she will send out commission stories/press to the governor’s office and then to 178 active media distributions statewide. Amanda suggests waiting to start social media accounts until someone can be permanently assigned to monitor social media handles and that the governor’s office can post large events for the commission until then. She shares that she hopes to start with a press release for Father’s Day, Commissioner Esmond hopes to brainstorm an event for press release. Commissioner Augustine agrees with the Father’s Day press release and utilizing the event for photos, flying banners, etc. Kawika Mattos thanks Amanda for her assistance over the years and introduces the 18th Annual Celebration of Fathers & Families event.

1. Aloha Father of the Year Awards
	1. Commissioner Alston shares that he has someone entering for the Father of the Year Award in Kauai.

iii. Parent-Friendly Business of the Year Awards

1. Sponsorship Award
	* 1. Commissioner Esmond proposes to update the application for the Sponsorship Award. He has added a section called Acknowledgement of Sponsorship; guidelines to display a digital logo, banner, and brochure, pending availability, the opportunity to host a table at event with up to 2 commissioners. Allen Cardines suggests uploading photos to the website with awardee and sponsorship banners.

**Motion to add item V to Sponsorship Award by Commissioner Esmond, seconded by Commissioner Alston, unanimously approved (10:32 am).**

**IV. Legislative Update (Vote) (50:35-1:44:33)**

a. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)

i. Legislative Opening Day – January 15, 2025 – recap; Commissioners Alston, Esmond

a. Commissioner Esmond shares his experience at LOD. Commissioner Alston shares that

it was a wonderful opportunity to share the COF mission and to see alignment in goals.

 Commissioner Esmond shares the brochure he created and handed out and about the

organizations that COF connected with.

b. Legislative Bills for discussion and possible testimony

i. SB1231 (SD#) / HB1193 (HD#) – Relating to Parentage

1. Commissioner Esmond introduces the Task Force aims of trying to update birth certificates and birth certificate information, especially regarding who is listed as father. He elaborates that in cases of alternative birth arrangements such as when a sperm/egg donor is used, the issue becomes who is legally put on the birth certificate. Commissioner Esmond shares his personal experience with surrogacy/egg donation, and how it connects him to this cause. He shares that the Task Force asks us to question when the intended parents turn to using a donor gamete, should that donor be anonymous or become identifiable when the child is 18, and that the SB1231 does not include the version that bans anonymous donors. Anonymous donors are still allowed and there is no official regulation regarding donor gametes and identity. Laurel Johnson (Act 156 Task Force representative for adoptee issues) shares her own story of being adopted, being given an amended birth certificate, and the closed adoption system, and how this impacted her to be a part of the task force. She shares that when she turned 18, she wanted to do her genealogy but found it to be difficult to access records of her birth parents and background. She has advocated on the Task Force to give donor-born children their private records upon request. Commissioner Alston asks if there is a way for a donor child at adulthood to request their records and Laurel clarifies that it is not possible and that dna testing does not necessarily provide that information. Commissioner Alston also asks if with the bill, would clinics not be able to use donors who want to be anonymous, Laurel clarifies that most likely, it would not allow donor gametes who want to be anonymous. Commissioner Oliphant asks if with the non-anonymity if the birth parent would have to feel a sense of responsibility to the child. Commissioner Esmond answers that their aim is to allow the child make decisions about whether they want to have contact with donors. Laurel answers that honoring hanai parenting is important to her and the task force.

**Motion for the Commission on Fatherhood to submit testimony by Commissioner Esmond, seconded by Commissioner Alston, Approved 5-1 (11:36 am).**

ii. SB1651 (SD1) – Relating to Public Meetings

 Commissioner Esmond introduces the COF comments on SB1651, with the opinion that the Public Meeting process is overcomplicated. He suggests to add a link to the state calendar meeting announcements to allow a board or commission to upload board packet at a later date and require that boards and commissions post a link to their own websites to the state calendar.

1. SB 1613 (SD#) / HB1246 (HD#) – Relating to Cannabis
	1. Commissioner Esmond shares that this bill is dead. Commissioner Oliphant asks if vote via email is allowed, Deputy Yamashiro clarifies votes are not allowed via email, but due to legislation moving quickly, she will ask for clarification. Commissioner Oliphant suggests designating one person to respond to hearings and present testimony on behalf of the commission. Deputy Yamashiro clarifies that this is allowed with follow up after hearings. Commissioner Oliphant suggests creating a list of priority bills that the commission is tracking.

**V. Current Fiscal Year Initiatives – Part 2 (Vote) (1:44:35-1:52:49)**

a. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)

 *This agenda has no item V, a.*

1. Outreach Events
	1. Maui Family Support Services, Inc. – 18th Annual Celebration of Fathers & Families on June 7, 2025, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon
		1. Commissioner Esmond shares that he hopes to send 2 commissioners to the Maui event. Kawika Mattos introduces the event overview, Commissioner Augustine volunteers to be there as Maui Family Support Services and two other commissioners go on behalf of the COF. Details to be worked out next meeting.
	2. Periodic online gathering of fatherhood commissioners nationwide
		1. Tabled until next meeting.
	3. Fatherhood Commission Luncheon
		1. Tabled until next meeting.
2. . Current fiscal year initiatives
	1. Strategic Plan and objectives – Commissioner Alston
		1. Tabled until next meeting.

*(Note: Commissioner Cardines exits meeting at 11:50 am.)*

**VI. Ongoing Business and Updates (1:52:50-1:54-17)**

a. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)

b. Commissioner position update

 Commissioner Esmond shares the difficulties of getting Jed Tesoro appointed as

commissioner and updates that Lowell and Tesoros’ terms will start July 1st, 2025.

**VII Upcoming Meetings (generally 3rd Friday every month 10:00 AM) (1:54:18-1:55:22)**

1. Community shares or concerns - Public Testimony (allow 1 minute)
	1. *This agenda has no item VII, a.*
2. Next Meetings
	* 1. March 28, 2025 (2nd or 4th Friday, Windward Community College or DHS)
		2. April 25, 2025 (4th Friday, Windward Community College or DHS)
		3. May 16, 2025 (DHS)
		4. June 20, 2025 (Windward Community College or DHS)

**VIII Conclusion (Vote) (1:55:23-1:56:30)**

1. Final thoughts
2. Vote to Adjourn

**Motion to Adjourn Meeting by Jeff Esmond, seconded by Oliphant, unanimously approved (12:00)**