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

**Friday, February 16, 2024**

**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:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoMkpmdl4MA**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoMkpmdl4MA)

**Meeting Call to Order: 10:08 AM**

**MISSION Statement: read by Commissioner Esmond (1:20-1:40)**

**[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 (1:41-13:13):**

**Commissioners Present:**

(All from 10:08am-11:01am)

* Jeff Esmond, Chair
* Kawika Mattos
* Allen Cardines
* Brian Alston
* Marty Oliphant

**Commissioners Absent**

* Alan Sunio

**Ex-Officios Present**

* Katherine Korenaga, DHS

**Sunshine Law Monitors**

* Deputy Erin Yamashiro
* Deputy Lili Young

**Guests:**

* Jed Tesoro
* Mana Olayan
* Punahou Aina, DOH
* Ashley Boutte
* Darius Kila
* Pastor Kala

**Vote: Commissioner Esmond makes motion to move agenda item V, C above item IV, F, seconded by Commissioner Mattos, unanimously approved (14:02).**

**II. Community shares or concerns (14:03-22:29):**

1. Public Testimony
	1. Mana Olayan testifies his opposition against the Recreational Marijuana Bill, citing the effects of drug use that he witnessed growing up and states that those who do not oppose to bill won’t see the lifetime effects and the destruction of the next generation (15:08-16:23).
	2. Jed Tesoro agrees with the opposition of Recreational Marijuana citing his experience as an educator and the effects of decisions such as vaping and the hospitalization of a girl who used a marijuana product. He also states there are enough challenges in society such as sex trafficking and that society does not need another challenge, especially with current mental health challenges of students and adults (16:30-17:35).
	3. Darius Kila also expresses his opposition on Recreational Marijuana, citing references about marijuana being a “gateway drug” for harder drugs, and the costs that come with legalization. He states that legalization would mean a $30 million appropriation required and full funding every year with $10 million increases to come, so with the state budget shortfalls and the fires on Maui, Kila in his own conscience could not support this initiative. He urges the commission to take a stance on the bill (18:39-20:30).
	4. Pastor Kala expresses his opposition citing his experience growing up on the streets and the impacts he saw from marijuana use. He also states that marijuana has a mind-altering chemical in it that will cause people in the community to become addicted, as well as the effects on those who have pre-existing mental conditions as marijuana can cause paranoia (20:55-22:05).

**III. Member Updates:**

1. Ex-officio Updates
	1. Katherine Korenaga shares that DHS just awarded a request for proposals to Keiki o’ Ka Aina to establish a child visiting and Family Resource Center at the Waiawa Correctional Facility. She states that it has been a long process but the contract is in the process of approvals and should be ready within the next week so that fathers can start to engage with their children and create a more positive space for children to connect (22:42-23:48).

b. Commissioner Updates (seniority order) and Community Outreach

i. Commissioner Cardines shares a video from a press conference on opposition to legalizing commercial marijuana. He follows the video by asking the commission to consider opposing the legalization. He also asks the commissioners to ask themselves whether recreational marijuana will help school campuses and workplaces, and issues such as fatherlessness, homelessness, and trafficking. He says that if the state cannot control things such as fireworks and school campuses, then how could the state put safeguards and regulations on marijuana. Commissioner Cardines shares that he has created a proposed draft utilizing the DOH’s concerns and hopes that the commission will take the same stance (25:00-33:31).

Commissioner Esmond states that he enjoyed the video, however what he was looking for were solutions to the problem as opposed to just saying “no” to the legalization. He expresses that a lot of thought went into the bill, and he feels that legalization gets control of marijuana use rather than having an illegal industry. He expresses his belief that the state should legalize marijuana and earn taxes on revenue, and that there is an advantage to legalization such as the ability to throw funding into increasing educational opportunities. He further states that there are still strict rules with the legalization, such as a zero tolerance for underage use (under 21 years of age) and driving under the influence (33:32-36:21).

Commissioner Oliphant shares that he opposes the legalization as he feels it will set a precedent for the state and conflict with state values. He cites his experience as a social worker, and the effects of substance use. He further states that he does not feel the state is equipped to take on commercial legalization of marijuana (36:29-38:18).

Commissioner Mattos expresses his gratitude for Commissioner Esmond’s stance as well as his personal opposition without having in-depth information. He cites his experience working with parents and children who have struggled with addiction as the reason for his opposition (38:41-40:21).

Commissioners discuss with the Sunshine Law Monitors if the matter can be voted on today, as a vote was not originally on the agenda. It is concluded that the vote will take place in the future and there will only be discussion during this meeting (40:22-44:23).

Commissioner Alston offers his input on recreational marijuana, stating that when permission is given, it opens other doors, especially for youth who may feel that they have permission just because it is legal. He concludes that he also stands in opposition (44:37-45:55)

**IV. Conclusion:**

1. Final Thoughts
	1. Commissioner Esmond asks the commission to tentatively plan on voting on the testimony for the marijuana bill in two weeks, around March 1st. Commissioner Mattos suggests to Commissioner Esmond to write a draft letter in both support and opposition of the bill with information to back each stance for the commission to review (45:46-52:38)

*(Note: Commissioner Cardines turns his video off at 51:46. Deputy Erin Yamashiro states that the meeting must end since Commissioner Cardines is no longer on video.)*

1. Vote to Adjourn
	1. Commissioner Esmond adjourns the meeting at 11:01 am (53:01) with no vote due to quorum not being met.