



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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ATTORNEY GENERAL AND LEGISLATORS ANNOUNCE AGREEMENT ON TWO CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

HONOLULU- Attorney General Mark Bennett and Members of the Democratic and Republican Caucuses of the Legislature today announced an agreement that will result in the voters being presented with the opportunity to vote on two constitutional amendments this fall. The agreement will be effectuated first through floor amendments to two bills on the floor of the House.

The first bill, Megan's Amendment, SB 2843, will be amended to provide that: (1) the public has a right of access to registration information regarding persons who have been convicted of certain crimes against children and certain sexual offenses; (2) the Legislature shall determine which offenses are subject to this public right of access; (3) the Legislature shall determine what information constitutes registration information to which the public has a right of access; (4) the Legislature shall determine the manner of public access to the registration information; and (5) the Legislature shall determine a period of time and conditions pursuant to which a convicted person may petition for termination of public access.

This amendment will help provide our citizens the right to know if convicted sex offenders are living in their neighborhood and will thus help protect the safety of our children and indeed all Hawaii's citizens.

The Legislature will also put into place a task force to report back to the Legislature before next session on sex offender registry practices in the other states and to recommend a system of public access for Hawaii.

The second bill, SB 2846, will be amended to allow the Legislature to pass legislation providing for the inadmissibility of privileged confidential communications between an alleged crime victim and the alleged crime victim's physician, psychologist, counselor, or licensed mental health professional.

This amendment will help provide absolute and necessary confidentiality for communications between victims of crime and those they go to for help. This protection is particularly important in cases of rape and sexual assault where victims are already reluctant to report crimes and seek help for themselves.

The Attorney General stated: "I am very happy that we were able to reach this agreement that

came about only because of the hard work and dedication of both the majority and minority members of the Legislature. These amendments protect our children and all of our citizens from sex offenders and pedophiles and help victims of crime, especially in rape and sexual assault cases, get the help they need. I believe the common sense of these amendments will resonate with the voters and I believe they will be approved in November."

Vice Speaker Sylvia J. Luke (D-Nuuanu, Punchbowl) reiterated: "This bipartisan agreement represents our collective effort to ensure that the public is notified of the whereabouts of serious sex offenders. Preventing crime is not a partisan issue. We must work together to protect children and others in our community."

Representative Cynthia Thielen (R-Kailua), Co-Chair of the bipartisan House Women's Caucus stated: "We need to protect all our citizens, especially our Keiki, from pedophiles and other sex offenders. I am very happy that this bipartisan effort will result in greater safety for all of us."

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