

**From:** CLK Council Info  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 07, 2015 10:57 PM

**Subject:** Budget Speaker Registration/Testimony  
**Attachments:** 20150407225638\_Testimony 1\_Jr. Mentor .pdf

## ~~Speaker Registration~~/Testimony

All fields marked "\*" are required and must be completed in order for this form to be valid.  
Note: Registrations are not accepted prior to the agendas being posted.

**Name(\*)** Kevin Lee Fujimoto, Psy.D.  
**Phone (\*)** 808-218-8733  
**Email (\*)** dr.kev@surferspirit.org  
**Meeting Date (\*)** 2015-04-08  
**Council/PH Committee (\*)** Budget  
**Agenda Item (\*)** Bill 13 - Grants in Aid Amendments  
**Your position on the matter (\*)** Support  
**Representing (\*)** Organization  
**Organization** Surfrider Spirit Sessions  
**Do you wish to speak at the hearing? (\*)** No

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### Written Testimony

Testimony of Kevin Lee Fujimoto, Psy.D., Executive Director, Surfrider Spirit Sessions Phone: 808-218-8733 Email: dr.kev@surferspirit.org Members of the City Council: Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of the proposed amendment to the Grants In Aid Bill 13, page 29 of 35. The Grants-in-Aid would provide much needed assistance for Surfrider Spirit Sessions, a 501c(3) non-profit that works with at-risk and adjudicated girls and boys ages 13 to 18 years old. Surfrider Spirit Sessions pair youth with volunteer adult mentors in 8-week sessions several times during the year. We not only engage our kids in the physical sport of surfing, but more importantly, we leverage the power of surfing as a metaphor for life, teaching values, coping skills, environmental and Hawaiian cultural lessons as well as providing a caring group of mentors who listen to and guide our youth. Our mentees learn to give back to others by participating in community service events with their mentors helping other vulnerable youth. We also provide job readiness skills and an

opportunity to those who are excited about the program to become junior mentors, working part-time with Surfrider Spirit Session staff. The Family Courts, parents and counselors report a significant reduction in truancy, drug use, violent outbursts, antisocial behavior and incarceration rates among youth who participate in Surfrider Spirit Sessions programs. The cost to confine a youth for one year at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility is \$199,000. Surfrider Spirit Sessions provides a substantial societal return when you consider the cost to society for each dropout who later moves to the life of crime or drugs is estimated to be between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million. How much better to reclaim a child's youth and provide positive influences! Our kids report increased self-confidence (they took a challenge and succeeded at surfing- an activity they never thought they could do), a more positive attitude towards their own potential, an increased commitment to education, improved resilience, and a growing desire to be a contributing member of our community. Attached are five letters from youth who recently participated in our mentoring program. Surfrider Spirit Sessions promise to be good stewards of the funds that the City and County would provide through the Grants in Aid program. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact us or visit our website at [www.surferspirit.org](http://www.surferspirit.org). We also invite you to see the Surfrider Spirit Sessions program in action at the beach and meet our mentors and our kids in person.

**Testimony  
Attachment**

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**Accept Terms and  
Conditions (\*)**

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I am a current 2014-2015 Jr. Mentor in Surfrider Spirit Sessions. I've had my time phase where I did some bad and really poor choices in this letter. I would like to say tanks to the Surfrider Spirit Sessions program for helping me out when I needed help. I will also talk about how this program has helped me in so many ways. Before joining this program, I was one of those kids that ran away, ditched school, didn't listen to my parents, and so forth. I did drugs. I didn't get a long with my mom and my two younger sisters. I was just struggling so much because I was the oldest, and there were so many things expected out of me in a very Jhana age. I attempted suicide 3 times. Then I was admitted to Kahi Mohala for almost 6 months. I was referred to this program by my former probation officer, Sandy. I believe she referred me because she wanted me to be social but be social with the right people. I think that she referred me to this program because she wanted to keep me busy. When she first told me about the program, I thought that it was really unnecessary. I thought that I didn't need it, but it wouldn't hurt to try it out.

My first day in the program, I was grouchy. I didn't want to talk to anybody. I didn't want to do anything. I just had the meanest attitude. My mentor was Laura. She was friendly. I really liked her because no matter how much I tried to scrape her off my shoulders, she always stuck on. When I tried to push her away, she would never leave. She encouraged me to try. Laura got me to go out into the water on the first day. We didn't catch a wave, however we got used to paddling by padding around. I really had a great time. By the end of the sessions, I didn't want it to end. I was sad that it was the end. But that's when I talked to Hoku, former SSS Jr. Mentor Manager, about being a Jr. Mentor.

I think being a Jr. Mentor is AWESOME! There are many responsibilities, but it makes me more stronger mentally and physically. One reason why I want to be a Junior Mentor is because I want to encourage teen s who are my age and who are going through the same situations that is not too late to change. I want to inspire them with my story and tell them how much this program has helped me.

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Thank you for making Surfrider Spirit Sessions such an important aspect of not only my life but of who I am and what I love. Thank you for being there during my roughest times and always supporting me. Thank you for encouraging me to strive for my passion. Thank you for teaching me the skills and values I need for life's curveballs. Thank you for sharing the good juju! I love you guys so much and I'm proud to call you my second family! I'll miss you all and I'll visit next summer, I promise! Keep the Stoke Alive!

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My name is Lea. I am 15 years old and am currently attending Mililani High School. I joined Surfrider program approximately two years ago, along with my sister Krisgayle. Seeing that Kris was in a bad place and going through tough situations, I wanted to be there to encourage her and be her supporter. Within the eight weeks of sessions, not only did I see massive changes and improvements in my sister, but in my self too. I was not as open and outgoing of a person to others before, but being able to bond with mentors and knowing that I can count on them, I became comfortable and

contented. This all inspired me to come back and be a Junior Mentor and continue helping other kids to get through their situations, and to also show them positive perspectives of life. In addition, I extremely enjoy being surrounded by all these amazing people who I call my 'Surfrider Ohana'.

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Before Surfrider Spirit Sessions, I was not in the place I would have liked to be. I felt like I didn't have a place in the world and I felt like I was born a screw up. I was getting into a lot of trouble. I was doing things without thinking about the consequences. My parents started to get really concerned and my mom really didn't want me to go on the way I was going. So she did everything she could to help me out and she came across Surfrider spirit sessions and asked me if I wanted to try it out. At first, I really didn't want to deal with any of it because I thought it would be just like all those other programs I tried and they didn't help me at all so I wasn't too fond of coming to SSS. But I wanted to make my mom happy so I gave it a try. The first time I showed up to the program, everyone was just super friendly towards me. I felt welcomed even though I am a very shy person. My mentor was Alyssa. She always talked to me and asked me a bunch of questions like she really wanted to get to know me. Even though I am hard to talk to because I'm very shy.

She still made an effort and it made me very excited to keep on going to sessions. During sessions we would get in a big circle before surfing. We would stretch and go over the theme of the day and while we were surfing, me and my mentor would talk all about it. Then wed go back in and eat lunch. Wed write down in our journals about the waves and what we were feeling. After sessions, I couldn't wait to go back next week. Through all the weeks I could feel myself maturing and opening up more. I felt liked and I just wanted to embrace it. I decided I didn't want to be known as a shy person. I just wanted people to know I could do much more than partying and being depressed all the time. I thought about becoming a Jr. mentor so I can show people who were once like me that its possible to change. Its possible to become positive and happy people have no idea what they are worth. They think that everything they touch they destroy. I want to let them know the truth. They are not screw ups. SSS gave me realization that I have the opportunity to be someone great. And I'm taking that opportunity to become a Jr. mentor.

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Before I entered Surfrider Spirit Sessions I was deeply into drugs. My old probation officer is the person that referred me to Spirit Sessions, we had a discussion about sports and he asked me if I knew how to surf and I said no. When I first attended the program will I learn how to surf or just give up from frustration? My life now shows a big difference from the past. At first I thought I wouldn't be a Jr. intern. But now that I am, I can see that I can accomplish cool good things in my life just by being myself.

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