



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF IIB 2468: RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**DATE:** February 8, 2008  
**TO:** **Representative Maile Shimabukuro, Chair, Representative Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Human Services and Housing**

**FROM:** Betty Lou Larson, Housing Programs Director, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

**HEARING:** **Tuesday, February 12, 2008; 8:40 am; Conf. Rm. #329**

Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members, Committee on Human Services & Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this housing bill. I am Betty Lou Larson, from Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We also are members of Partners in Care, Housing Hawaii and the Affordable Housing and Homeless Alliance. We strongly support this bill.

We suggest one amendment to Section 30: We urge you to delete the sunset date for the allocation of conveyance tax to the rental housing trust fund. This will create an ongoing source of funding for affordable rentals. This is a critical to ensure a consistent source of funding for developers of these units as they plan their projects. Catholic Charities Hawai'i receives over a thousand calls each month, many for housing help. Over half of the seniors who come to Catholic Charities Hawai'i's Housing Assistance Program are facing homeless. Families with children are still ending up on beaches or in cars. We need to continue to focus on creating a large number of affordable housing units. A permanent source of funding is needed.

Many housing bills this year suggest pieces of the solution to create affordable housing. We appreciate your dedication to pull all these together and concentrate resources to achieve a major impact on affordable housing for our State.

We support the infusion of **\$30 million** from GO bonds to the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund (DURF) as one resource to expand the number of rental units that can be created in the next 3-5 years. In HB 2050, there is also a \$25 million request for the Rental Housing Trust Fund. Both DURF and the Trust Fund are important pieces in the creation of more affordable housing. The Rental Housing Trust Fund has one unique feature that is different from DURF: it mandates that 5% of the units build with these funds must be affordable and targeted to persons at 30% of the median income or below. This is an important difference, since these units are the only new units being produced to help our elders on SSI, or families earning the minimum wage or other low income families. Thus we urge that both the Rental Housing Trust Fund and DURF are important to fund.

This bill also suggests a creative way to help reduce some of the backlog in processing at the county level. We support the appropriation of \$500,000 to for third party review and certification to expedite the processing and issuance of building permits for affordable housing projects.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and support for ways to achieve more affordable housing and to expedite the processing of affordable housing projects.



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2468: RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

DATE: February 11, 2008

TO: Representative Maile Shimabukuro, Chair, Representative Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Neighborhood Board #8, Mc-Cully Moiliili, Betty Lou Larson, Chair, Housing & Homelessness Committee of NB

HEARING: Tuesday, February 12, 2008; 8:40 am; Conf. Rm. #329

Chair Shimabukuro, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members, Committee on Human Services & Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this housing bill. I am Betty Lou Larson, representing the Mc-Cully Moiliili Neighborhood Board # 8.

In a resolution (see attached), passed by the Board on 2/7/08, we support that funding to the Rental Housing Trust Fund be made permanent. We request an amendment to this bill to repeal the sunset date of 2013 for the conveyance tax and that 65% of the conveyance tax (vs the current 50%) be allocated to the Trust Fund.

Our Board and our community is very concerned about the issues of affordable rental housing and homelessness. We have supported the affordable rental projects proposed for our neighborhood and which have now been built. However, these are inadequate to meet the growing need.

We have homeless persons sleeping at bus stops, in parks, in bushes in many parts of our neighborhood. We have people sleeping in cars. We have elders and working families who are in crisis and unable to afford the market rents that have increased greatly over the past few years. Our neighborhood is similar to neighborhoods across the state that are being impacted by the severe lack of affordable housing.

We need an infusion of funds to build more new affordable rentals, in our community and throughout the State. We urge you to consider the needs of our neighborhoods and amend the bill, as suggested above.