

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



CHAD K. TANIGUCHI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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Statement of
Chad K. Taniguchi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 20, 2008, 2:30 p.m.
Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
H.B. 2511 HD1
RELATING TO RENTAL ASSISTANCE

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) provides the following comments on H.B. 2511 HD1:

Pursuant to Act 223, 2007, the HPHA increased the income limits for participation in the Rent Supplement Program (RSP) on January 1, 2008. In addition, the participation in the RSP was broadened by increasing the \$160 limitation on the subsidy amount to \$230 per month. Due to these changes, the HPHA projects that the \$1,000,000 appropriated for the program will be fully expended during the fiscal year with the current number of 394 participants plus about 15 more new participants by the end of Fiscal Year 2008. Challenges in previous years to expend RSP funds have been resolved.

HPHA has concerns regarding the provision in this bill requiring priority be given to applicants who are homeless or in emergency or transitional shelters, once the current waitlist is exhausted. The program, as originally conceived in 1967, was intended to assist "gap group" renter households who earned too much to qualify for federal assistance programs but too little to pay market rent and still have money left over to meet their household needs. Currently there are many programs to assist the homeless, including a preference for placement in public housing. The RSP is one of the few homeless prevention programs to assist those who are a paycheck away from homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



HB 2511, HD 1 (HSCR 620-08) Relating to Rental Assistance
Committee on Finance

February 20, 2008
308

2:30 pm

Room

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs supports the purpose and intent of HB 2511, HD 1 (HSCR 620-08).

The Hawaii Housing Policy Study Update, 2006 confirmed while most Hawaiians looking to move would prefer to buy their next home, most may face significant challenges because of their relatively low income per household member. However, Hawaiian households would be willing to accept a multi-family dwelling if a single family dwelling was not available in their price range. Until then, Hawaiians are more likely to be renters.

There is a disconnect between the time there is an increase in their income places them ineligible for public housing and being able to find an affordable rental in the private market place. There is an insufficient number of affordable rentals to meet the needs of this group and more time is needed to be able to make decisions on the different types of changes that will affect the family when looking for a place to rent.

We recognize that physical solutions by themselves will not solve social and economic problems, but neither can economic vitality, community stability, and environmental health be sustained without a coherent and supportive physical framework. In this example, the framework is giving the family a realistic amount of time to find a qualified rental dwelling.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

FINtestimony

From: Joel Fischer [jfischer@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Saturday, February 16, 2008 8:24 PM
To: FINtestimony
Subject: HB2511; FIN; 2/20; 2:30; Rm 308

Importance: High

HB2511, Relating to Rental Assistance
FIN; Chair, Rep Oshiro

PLEASE PASS THIS BILL.

We all understand just how incredibly difficult the rental market is in Hawai'i. Expecting low-income people to immediately find a rental is unbelievably unrealistic and callous.

This bill adds common sense to the law by providing a much more realistic deadline for finding a rental.

Thank you very much for hearing this bill.

Aloha, joel

Dr. Joel Fischer, ACSW
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"It is reasonable that everyone who asks justice should DO justice."
Thomas Jefferson

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because one's conscience tells one that it is right."
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Never, never, never quit."
Winston Churchill