



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Statement of
Chad K. Taniguchi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC HOUSING

March 18, 2008, 1:15 p.m.
Room 016, Hawaii State Capitol

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

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) provides 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 allowing qualified applicants up to ninety days to secure a dwelling unit. This will make it difficult for HPHA to efficiently expend RSP funds, which was a concern of the Legislature in the past. In addition, it would create a level of uncertainty as to when funds would need to be available and when HPHA would be expected to start expending funds. HPHA will spend unnecessary staff time and the problem of unexpended funds will rise again.

It is also important to note that in H.B. 2500 HD1, Relating to the State Budget, the operating budget for the RSP has been reduced by approximately \$312,000. This reduction in operating funding will further complicate HPHA's ability to carry out the provisions of H.B. 2511 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice-chair
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing
Hawaii Centers for Independent Living

Tuesday, March 18, 2008, 1:15 PM

Opposing HB 2511, HD1, Relating to Rental Assistance

Hawaii Centers for Independent Living is a non-profit organization operated by and for people with disabilities to ensure their rights to live independently and fully integrated in the community of their choice, outside of institutional care settings. As a non-profit, statewide resource, HCIL serves people of any age with any type of disability. HCIL was founded on the historical constitutional beliefs of civil rights and the empowerment of people with disabilities to have equal access, opportunities, and choices in life, no matter how severe their disability.

We oppose HB2511, HD1, Relating to Rental Assistance.

Our opposition to HB2511, HD1 is based on an amendment made to the bill which gives the homeless and those in transitional shelters priority for the rental assistance program over other applicants, including people with disabilities. The Hawaii Public Housing Authority recently used an administrative rule change to do a similar thing with the waitlist for vacant units, plunging many of our consumers to the bottom of a list they had been on for years. Pitting the homeless against other members of society who are in need, such as people with disabilities, is not the way to solve the homelessness crisis. Moreover, few if any of Hawai'i's transitional shelters are accessible, so even those people with disabilities who are at risk of becoming homeless won't be able to take advantage of this provision.

This bill, if passed, would make it even tougher to move people out of long-term care facilities and into the community. The state is spending a lot of money to keep people with disabilities in institutions where they don't belong. Plus, the lack of affordable, accessible housing exacerbates the state's chronic shortage of nursing home beds. And now people with disabilities are looking at getting shoved to the bottom of yet another housing waitlist.

We urge the committee not to pass HB2511, HD1. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

testimony

From: Joel Fischer [jfischer@hawaii.edu]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 12:39 PM
To: testimony
Subject: HB2511; HSPH; 3/18; 1:15; Rm 016

Importance: High

Attachments: Card for Joel Fischer <jfischer@hawaii.edu>



jfischer.vcf (343 B)

HB2511, HD1, Relating to Rental Assistance HSPH; Chair, sen Chun-Oakland

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
President, 19-3, Democratic Party

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University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work Henke Hall Honolulu, HI 96822

"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