

George J. Zweibel, Esq.  
President, Board of Directors

Charles K. Greenfield, Esq.  
Executive Director

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2208 -**  
**Relating to Domestic Violence**

February 7, 2008 at 1:15 p.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawai'i ("Legal Aid") hereby provides testimony to the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing **in support of SB2208, Relating to Domestic Violence** which provides added protections for victims of domestic violence in rental housing.

I apologize that I am not available to testify in person as I'm traveling on the mainland on business, but am available for questions via telephone.

Legal Aid is the largest non-profit, private legal services organization in the State. We provide legal services for domestic violence victims and is one of the only legal service organizations to have a unit dedicated housing.

We are in strong support of this bill as it is critical for victims of domestic violence to be able to either secure their homes after an incident of domestic violence by changing the locks or have the ability to terminate a lease without penalty in order to seek a safer housing situation.

Being able to change the locks on their home or terminate a lease can be critical to ensuring safety for a victim of domestic violence. A 1990 Ford Foundation study found that 50% of homeless women and children were fleeing abuse.<sup>1</sup> In 1998, a study of 777 homeless parents (the majority of whom were mothers) in ten U.S. cities, 22% said they had left their last place of residence because of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup> A 2003 survey of 100 homeless mothers in 10 locations around the country found that 25% of the women had been physically abused in the last year.<sup>3</sup> In addition, 50% of the 24 cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness.<sup>4</sup>

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nalani Fujimori, Deputy Director  
(808)527-8014

<sup>1</sup> Zorza, Joan, "Woman Battering: A Major cause of Homelessness", Clearing House Review, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Homes for the Homeless, "Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America," (1998). Available from Homes for the Homeless & Institute for Children and Poverty.

<sup>3</sup> American Civil Liberties Union, "Domestic Violence Project" (2004); available at [www.aclu.org](http://www.aclu.org).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Conference of Mayors, "A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities": 2005.



TO: Chair Suzanne Chun Oakland  
Vice Chair Les Ihara, Jr.  
Members of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FR: Nanci Kreidman, M.A.  
Executive Director

RE: S.B. 2208

Aloha. We are in support of S.B. 2208 and would ask your support of this important measure for victims of domestic violence, which ultimately prevents homelessness, creates safety and permits decision-making based on economic factors.

As a community we must work together, putting into place policies, practices, training, and resources that match the philosophical conviction we have embraced. Victims need services, choices, access and the right to live free from violence. Abuse is the responsibility of the person who chooses to use it, and accountability belongs with the abuser.

Victims and their children need homes. They deserve the right to remain in their homes without suffering punishment resulting from the abuser's conduct.

If on the other hand, a victim decides it is in the family's best interest to depart their dwelling, it is wise for the community (landlord) to allow for such escape. Either economics or safety are driving that decision to depart, and we must provide the opportunity for the victim to exercise options for the continued wellbeing of herself and the other members of her family.

Thank you for inviting input about this issue through the hearing of S.B. 2208.

# HAWAII STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Hearing date and time: February 7, 2008 at 1:15p.m., Committees on Human Services and Public Housing

RE: S.B. 2208, RELATING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

TO: Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara and members of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing;

FROM: Ana Maring, Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Aloha, my name is Ana Maring and I represent the Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV). HSCADV is a private non-profit agency which serves as a touchstone agency for the majority of domestic violence programs throughout the state. For many years HSCADV has worked with the Hawaii Legislature by serving as an educational resource and representing the many voices of domestic violence programs and survivors of domestic violence.

HSCADV strongly supports SB2208.

In a 1998 study, 22 percent of 777 individuals surveyed stated that they had fled their home because of domestic violence<sup>1</sup>. It is imperative that victims of domestic violence be able to exercise many different options for their safety and the safety of their children. This may include changing the locks on their current home or breaking a lease to flee for safety.

Often victims of domestic violence flee with little or no money. If she seeks emergency shelter and fails to pay her rent and/or breaks her lease - it can destroy her rental and credit history. Studies have shown that victims and survivors of domestic violence have trouble finding apartments because they may have poor credit, rental, and employment histories as a result of their abuse<sup>2</sup>. By allowing women to end their leases early if needed they can locate another place to live away from their batterer.

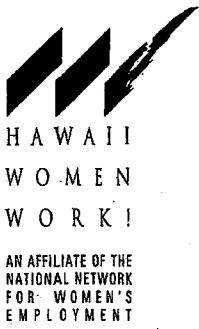
Hawaii continues to work to bring about many solutions to the issues impacting victims of domestic violence. SB2208 is an important part of the puzzle that will assist victims in their journey to safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ten Cities 1997-1998: A Snapshot of Family Homelessness Across America*. Homes for the Homeless. Retrieved January

<sup>2</sup> Susan A. Reif and Lisa J. Krisher. 2000. "Subsidized Housing and the Unique Needs of Domestic Violence Victim." *Clearing House Review*. National Center on Poverty Law. Chicago, IL.



HAWAII  
WOMEN  
WORK!

AN AFFILIATE OF THE  
NATIONAL NETWORK  
FOR WOMEN'S  
EMPLOYMENT

SENATE Human Services & Public  
Housing  
Thurs, Feb 7, 2008  
1:15 pm  
Deliver 1 copies to Rm 226

2600 Campus Rd. QLCSS #211  
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Date: February 2, 2008

TO: SENATE HUMAN SERVICES & PUBLIC HOUSING  
Sen. Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Sen. Les Ihara, Vice Chair

From: Teresa Bill

RE: **SUPPORT** SB 2208, Relating to Domestic Violence

Thurs. Feb. 7, 2008 1:15 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 016

I am Teresa Bill, testifying **in support of SB 2208** on behalf of Hawai'i WomenWork! which is a member of the Welfare Employment Rights Coalition and the Women's Coalition.

As we know, victims of domestic violence span the economic and social strata of our state. In addition to the need for advocacy and legal services, victims are concerned about where they will live. Having fled a violent situation, they now need to focus on where they will live. HB2762 addresses a number of concerns of women fleeing domestic violence. It includes provisions that the woman may leave the lease without penalty. It also includes the important provision that landlords may not discriminate against renting to a woman because of her domestic violence status. These are both immensely important options for women rebuilding their lives.

I know landlords will want to maintain as much of their ability to restrict who they rent their unit to. However, the need of victims of domestic violence to also have options to either leave a lease or to establish a new lease are paramount. HB 2762 includes many provisions to ensure that the landlord is paid appropriately for releasing a tenant from the lease.

Please support HB 2762 and address a real need domestic violence victims have once they have fled their abuser.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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February 6, 2008

**The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair**  
Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing  
State Capitol, Room 226  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: S.B. 2208 Relating to Domestic Violence**  
**Hearing Date: Thursday, February 7, 2008 @ 1:15 p.m., Room 016**

Dear Chair Chun Oakland and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing,

On behalf of our 10,000 members in Hawaii, the Hawaii Association of REALTORS® (HAR) submits comments on S.B. 2208.

HAR wholeheartedly agrees that there are serious cases of domestic violence and that those who commit these offenses are subject to certain types of protective orders. Domestic violence is a national problem, not only one that is confined to Hawaii. This is a serious social issue that requires vigilant intervention by local police, the court system, and social services to establish truly effective means of addressing this problem.

Historically, incidents have shown that the levels of violence in these abusive relationships tend to escalate up to and including loss of life. Even more onerous is the fact that, historically, levels of violence in these abusive relationships tends to escalate and can include harm and loss of life not just to the victim but to innocent individuals in neighboring units, homes, or communities. These innocent ones, and not only the victim, expect and deserve quiet and secure enjoyment of the immediate and surrounding areas of their home.

HAR believes that this bill does not solve the need for a better transitional opportunity into the community and that protection through existing law enforcement (police and courts) and better programs that key in on the health and welfare for the victims may be a better alternative.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

## NA LOIO

Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Law Center  
810 N. Vineyard Blvd.  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817  
Telephone: (808)847-8828  
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Email: [info@naloio.org](mailto:info@naloio.org)

February 6, 2008

Hearing date and time: February 7, 2008 at 1:15 p.m., Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

RE: S.B. 2208, RELATING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

(Written testimony only)

TO: Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Calleen Ching, Attorney, Na Loio

Na Loio *supports this bill*, to protect domestic violence victims in rental housing.

Na Loio is a statewide private, nonprofit agency providing immigration legal services to indigent immigrants. Assisting immigrant victims of domestic violence and sexual assault is a top priority for Na Loio.

Safe housing is very important to domestic violence victims. While many domestic violence victims may be able immediately flee to an emergency shelter for safety, their stay at the shelter is temporary and they must leave after a short period of time. Safe and stable housing is necessary for them to end the abusive relationship and leave their abuser.

There is a strong connection between domestic violence and homelessness. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, domestic violence is the most cited reason for the cause of homelessness in families. (National Alliance to End Homelessness, June 2007). The National Network to End Domestic Violence found that on a daily basis 1,740 victims could not be provided emergency shelter and 1,422 could not be provided transitional shelter. (National Network to End Domestic Violence, 2004). With nowhere to go victims may choose to return to the abusive relationship. Our community should provide a safety net for them.

This bill would allow specific protections to domestic violence victims to find and/or keep safe housing. Na Loio encourages the bill's approval. Thank you for allowing us to testify.

**testimony**

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**From:** Lurline Johnson (R) [lur@pixi.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 05, 2008 6:12 PM

**To:** testimony

**Subject:** S.B. 2208 Relating to Domestic Violence - Hearing Date: February 7, 2008 @ 1:15 p.m., Room 016



NARPM – Oahu Chapter  
2131 S. Beretania Street, Suite 204  
Honolulu, HI 96826

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February 7, 2008

**The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair** Senate  
Committee on Human Services and  
Public Housing  
State Capitol, Room 226  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: S.B. 2208 Relating to Domestic Violence**  
**Hearing Date: February 7, 2008 @ 1:15 p.m., Room 016**

Dear Chair Chun Oakland and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

On behalf of the Oahu Chapter of the National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM), who is a group of professional property managers conducting property management on the island of Oahu, we are strongly opposed to S.B. 2208.

NARPM agrees that domestic violence is a grievous problem not only in Hawaii but across the nation. Recent incidents here on Oahu have brought this issue to the forefront of our minds and have stoked the fire for better solutions to this ultimately deadly problem.

The problem needs to be addressed closer to the core through education and combined efforts of social services agencies and law enforcement. The cycle of violence perpetuates itself from generation to generation and the solution may be better addressed within the cooperation of law enforcement and social

2/5/2008

programs that will educate and mentor these victims and perpetrators.

Having victims of domestic violence protected while placing neighbors at risk seems questionable. Everyone is entitled to peaceful enjoyment of their home and the safety and security that comes along with that. We don't have the solution for the problem but as landlords we need to be aware of how tenants residing in our units – and the individuals they attract – affect not only their neighbors but the community as a whole.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**testimony**

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**From:** Dara Carlin, M.A. [breaking-the-silence@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 06, 2008 9:19 PM  
**To:** testimony  
**Subject:** SB2208 on 02/07/08 at 1:15pm, Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

To: Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Human Services & Public Housing

From: Dara Carlin, M.A.  
Oahu VOICES Representative  
716 Umi Street, Suite 210  
Honolulu, HI 96819

Date: February 7, 2008

Re: **Strong Support for SB2208**, Relating to Domestic Violence

Getting out and away from domestic violence is not as easy as simply leaving and when victims do finally take that leap of faith out and away, their primary and long-term concern for themselves and their children is SAFETY. Victims of domestic violence know from firsthand experience what their abusers are capable of doing to them and also know from firsthand experience that they cannot keep themselves and their children safe without protection from others.

Unfortunately, when victims identify themselves as DV victims or survivors to others, the response is not overwhelming, whole-hearted support. Domestic violence is an ugly, ugly problem and the natural tendency is to pull away when faced with something ugly or unpleasant - but this pulling away comes at the worst time when a victim is leaving and is trying to maintain as much stability as possible or has left and is attempting to start her life over. Because of the stigma still associated with being a DV victim and the risk of her abuser coming around, it is not uncommon for victims of domestic violence to find themselves facing prejudice and one arena for that concerns rental housing.

SB2208 is not asking for special privileges for domestic violence victims in rental housing situations - it's requesting that protections be provided for domestic violence victims in rental housing situations. It seeks fairness, equity and stability for victims in a certainly unstable situation. Please support domestic violence victims by supporting SB2208.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully,

Dara Carlin, M.A.  
Oahu VOICES Representative

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Jeanne Y. Ohta

1016 A Hind Iuka Drive  
Honolulu, HI 96821

February 7, 2008

To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senator Les Ihara, Vice Chair and  
Members of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

Re: SB 2208 Relating to Domestic Violence  
Hearing: February 7, 2008, 1:15 p.m., Room 016

Position: Strong Support

Good afternoon Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Ihara, and members of the Committee on Human Services and Public Housing. I am testifying today in strong support of SB 2208 Relating to Domestic Violence which would provide protections for victims of domestic violence. This bill is also supported by the Hawaii Women's Coalition.

Victims of domestic violence have a right to be safe and to have housing stability. Sometimes, to ensure their safety, they need to move and cannot wait until the end of their lease. Having to pay a penalty for terminating a lease can be a huge barrier to their safety and many cannot afford such a penalty. This measure protects them from having to pay the penalty and assists them in finding a safer situation without having to wait.

This bill also requires that landlords change or allow door locks to be changed at the renter's cost. Obviously, it is important that the victim have control over who has keys to her home. Changing door locks allows her to exclude previous household members who are no longer permitted in her home and who may pose a danger to her.

I urge you to pass this bill to provide practical solutions to domestic violence victims who are trying to find safety for themselves and their children. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.