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LATE TESTIMONY

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

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSING**

March 11, 2008, 8:30 a.m.  
Room 329, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of  
**S.B. 3060**

**RELATING TO HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY EVICTIONS BOARDS**

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) strongly supports S.B. 3060, which would allow HPHA evictions boards to hold an eviction hearing without the public housing tenant member of the eviction board present, so long as a quorum is met. Tenant members will still be on the board. This bill will allow hearings to go on even if the tenant member happens to be absent for a particular eviction hearing. Currently the tenant member is the only eviction board member who cannot be absent.

Section 356D-93 (b), Hawaii Revised Statutes, states that the tenant member of the eviction board must be in attendance at every eviction hearing. If the tenant member is absent and all other eviction board members are present, the hearing cannot proceed.

Currently, it is difficult to find public housing tenants who are willing to serve on the evictions boards. This reluctance stems from fear of potential repercussions, such as retaliation, acted out by fellow public housing tenants who appear before the board. This has been the case amongst close-knit communities living in public housing projects on the neighbor islands.

Even when tenant board members serve, eviction hearings have been delayed for months due to the inability to have a public housing tenant attend a particular hearing because of fear of retaliation. Oftentimes during these time delays, public housing tenants awaiting a hearing stop paying rent, thereby exacerbating the already bad tenant delinquency problem.

This bill will not change the requirement that every eviction board must have a member who is a public housing tenant. HPHA acknowledges the value of the tenant member on the board. This bill, however, is a necessary step to eliminating time delays in conducting eviction hearings and will create a cost savings for the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, which is operating at a deficit.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.