

HB 1098



Senate HMS Cmte  
Thurs, Mar 19, 2009  
2:15 pm  
room 016

National Association of Social Workers

Hawaii Chapter

March 16, 2009

TO: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland  
Members of the Senate Human Services Committee

FROM: Debbie Shimizu, LSW  
National Association of Social Workers, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **HB 1098 HD2** Relating to General Assistance- **SUPPORT**

Chair Chun Oakland and members of the Senate Human Services Committee, I am Debbie Shimizu, Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Hawaii Chapter. I am also a member of the Financial Assistance Advisory Council (FAAC) of DHS and the Welfare and Employment Rights Coalition (WERC). **NASW supports HB 1098 HD2.**

The purpose of HB 1098 HD2 is to change the way the General Assistance (GA) program is funded. Currently the program is funded by a block grant appropriated by the Legislature. The Department has admitted that having GA as a fixed block grant is difficult to maintain when the number of individuals applying for GA is increasing. For the past few years, the amount of the GA block grant has been inadequate to maintain paying all recipients at the \$469/mon level. We applaud the Department for continuing to fund GA recipients at this level despite the inadequate funds in the block grant. The Department has had to "borrow" from the appropriation for the ABD population to maintain giving \$469/mon to GA recipients. To avoid this practice of "borrowing" from the ABD appropriation, we support changing General Assistance into an entitlement program rather than a block grant. HB 1098 HD2 proposes to do this, however, **we prefer SB 1668 SD2.**

The Financial Assistance Advisory Council has discussed this issue with the DHS and both have agreed to proceed making both programs (ie, ABD and GA) entitlement programs.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**TESTIFYING IN SUPPORT, REQUESTING AMENDMENTS TO  
HB1098 HD2 - RELATING TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

March 19, 2009 at 2:15 p.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii hereby provides testimony in support, but requesting amendments to the Senate Committee on Human Services on HB1097 – Relating to General Assistance (“GA”).

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii provides free legal services to the low-income population of the State of Hawaii. We provided civil legal assistance to those in need through nine offices located in Lihue, Waianae, Honolulu, Kaneohe, Kaunakakai, Lanai City, Wailuku, Kona and Hilo. Over the years we have provided leadership around public benefits issues and on an annual basis update our public benefits manual and provide a two-day training on public benefits.

As written, this bill would (1) put a twenty-four month time limit on GA recipients; (2) require DHS to consider an applicant for the Aid to Aged Blind and Permanently and Totally Disabled program (“AABD”) after twelve months or upon turning 65; and (3) convert the GA program into an entitlement program. We support this bill, although would ask for amendments to allow for good cause exceptions to not counting months toward the time limits and ask for provisions to protect those actively seeking substance abuse treatment.

**GOOD CAUSE EXCEPTIONS TO NOT COUNTING MONTHS**

GA is for disabled individuals and by its nature these individuals are mentally and physically disabled. While filing for social security and ensuring that they have an application pending should be a relatively easy requirement to meet, the disabilities faced by many of these recipients sometimes make it difficult for them to initially pursue and application or maintain the pursuant of this application. In addition, recent cut backs to mental health community programs now limit the amount of hours available for mental health case workers to assist recipients in making meetings, gathering information and following through with applications.

As such, we are also requesting amendments to this bill which would allow for a good cause exception to the proposed GA time limit.

**PROVISIONS TO PROTECTION THOSE ACTIVELY SEEKING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT**

One of the groups that general assistance provides funding to are those actively seeking substance abuse treatment. As former clients spoke on last night’s news regarding the cuts to the General Assistance program, GA payments have helped them receive treatment, get college degrees and come back to help others in the same situation.

Substance abuse is not something that can be cured in twelve months, for some the period of recovery is much longer and relapse is a common part of the substance abuse recovery process. As such, we request amendments to allow an exemption from the time limit for those actively seeking substance abuse treatment.

March 18, 2009

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We have also provided a new HD2 which incorporates and highlights proposed changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

M. Nalani Fujimori  
Interim Executive Director

General Assistance

**Description:**

Places a twelve-month limit on general assistance to households without minor dependents with appropriate exceptions.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 2009  
STATE OF HAWAII

H.B. NO. 1098  
HD 2

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A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

SECTION 1. Section 346-71, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§346-71 **General assistance to households without minor dependents.** (a) The department of human services is authorized to administer and provide state-funded public assistance to eligible persons who are disabled, who are not otherwise provided for under this chapter, and who are unable to provide sufficient support for themselves or those dependent upon them; provided that such persons:

- (1) Have first been determined ineligible for a comparable federally funded financial assistance program;
- (2) Are bona fide residents of this State; and
- (3) Have furnished to the department a social security account number for each member of the assistance unit or verification that an application was made with the Social Security Administration for a social security account number for each member of the assistance unit.

Persons who meet the categorical criteria for eligibility, but fail to satisfy income and resource criteria adopted by the department shall not be eligible for general assistance to household without minor dependents. The failure of any adult member of the assistance unit to comply with the requirements or conditions of general assistance to households without minor dependents shall exclude the entire assistance unit from receiving financial assistance. However, when the adult member is disqualified for not meeting the work requirement, the assistance unit shall not be disqualified if the assistance unit was formed after the failure to meet the work requirement occurred. "Assistance unit" as the term is used in this section means persons whose needs, income, and assets are considered in the financial assistance payment and their dependents.

For purposes of determining whether persons seeking assistance are bona fide residents of this State, the department of human services shall consider, but is not limited to considering, the following factors:

- (1) Enrollment and receipt of welfare benefits from another jurisdiction;
- (2) Physical presence in the State;
- (3) Maintenance of a place of residence in the State;
- (4) The availability of furnishings and household and personal effects sufficient to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the place of residence is more than a public accommodation;
- (5) Qualification as to residence for purposes of voting in the State;
- (6) Change in vehicle operation license;
- (7) Vehicle registration;
- (8) Enrollment of children in local schools; and
- (9) Bank accounts in this State or any other jurisdiction.

(b) A person between eighteen and sixty-five years of age with a disability shall be eligible for general assistance to households without minor dependents for a period not to exceed twenty four months unless good cause exists if the person:

- (1) Is determined to be needy in accordance with standards established by this chapter and the rules adopted under subsection (c);

- (2) Is unable to meet the disability requirements established by the federal Supplemental Security Income Program or its successor agency; and
- (3) Is unable to engage in any substantial gainful employment because of a determined and certified physical, mental, or combination of physical and mental disability. Upon application, the department shall ask the person whether the person has a physical or mental disability, or both. If the person claims to have both a physical and mental disability, the department shall ask the person to choose whether the person's primary disability is physical or mental. Determination and certification of the disability shall be as follows:
  - (A) A determination and certification of physical disability shall be made by a board of licensed physicians designated and paid by the department. Meetings of this board shall not be subject to part I of chapter 92;
  - (B) A determination and certification of mental disability shall be made by a board of licensed psychologists or licensed physicians whose specialty is in psychiatry. This board shall be designated and paid by the department. Meetings of this board shall not be subject to part I of chapter 92;
  - (C) If a determination and certification is made that the applicant does not have a physical, mental, or combination of a physical and mental disability, prior to a denial of any claim, the department shall provide the applicant with an initial denial notice that gives the applicant at least ten calendar days to provide additional medical evidence. The notice shall refer the applicant to free legal services for assistance and permit the applicant to request extensions of time, if necessary;
  - (D) If a determination of physical, mental, or combination of a physical and mental disability is made, the person shall accept and pursue appropriate medical treatment from a provider of the person's choice. The department shall promptly provide the person with a complete and legible copy of the recommended appropriate treatment;
  - (E) Any person, to continue to be certified as mentally disabled, physically disabled, or both mentally and physically disabled, shall be reevaluated annually, as provided by this section, and more frequently, as required by the department provided that after twelve months or upon turning 65, the department refers the person for eligibility under the aged blind and permanently and totally disabled program; and
  - (F) Failure to pursue appropriate medical treatment shall result in a loss of eligibility, unless the failure is due to good cause. [Good cause shall include but not be limited to:
    - (i) Treatment is unavailable;
    - (ii) Personal emergencies; and
    - (iii) Circumstances that threaten the safety of the patient;

The department shall adopt rules in accordance with chapter 91 to define "good cause", as used in subparagraph (F), in order to determine when treatment is unavailable, what constitutes a personal emergency, what circumstances may threaten the safety of a patient, and other factors that may constitute good cause.

As used in this subsection:

"Good cause" shall include, but not be limited to:

- (i) Treatment is unavailable;
- (ii) Personal emergencies;
- (iii) Circumstances that threaten the safety of the patient; and
- (iv) Disability affects the ability of the patient to follow-through with recommendations.

The department shall adopt rules in accordance with chapter 91 to define "good cause," as used above, in order to determine when treatment is unavailable, what constitutes a personal emergency, what circumstances may threaten the safety of a patient, what diagnosed disability affects the ability of the patient to follow-through with recommendations, and other factors that may constitute good cause.

"Substantial gainful employment" means at least thirty hours of work per week.

"With a disability" or "having a disability" means a disability that extends for a period of over sixty days.

Any person determined to be eligible under this subsection may be referred to any appropriate state agency for vocational rehabilitation services and shall be required to accept the services as a further condition

of eligibility for the receipt of general assistance to households without minor dependents under this section. An assistance unit shall be determined ineligible for general assistance to households without minor dependents if any adult member of the assistance unit fails to cooperate with any appropriate state agency for vocational rehabilitation services after being referred for services. Any person found eligible under this subsection may also be required to seek employment and participate in public work projects, as described in section 346-31, and in public employment projects, as described in section 346-102.

(c) Applicants and recipients shall be required to satisfy all applicable provisions of this section. Recipients disqualified for failure to comply with any of the requirements under this section shall be excluded from general assistance to households without minor dependents for a period not to exceed twelve months.

(d) The allowance for general assistance to households without minor dependents shall not exceed sixty-two and one-half per cent of the standard of need.

(e) Within the limitations of this section, the department shall by rules adopted pursuant to chapter 91, determine:

- (1) The allowance for general assistance to households without minor dependents based upon the total amount appropriated for general assistance to households without minor dependents;
- (2) A method for determining assistance amounts; and
- (3) Other necessary provisions to implement general assistance to households without minor dependents.

(f) Any month in which a person receives assistance pending an eligibility determination for the federal Supplemental Security Income Program or a successor program or in which the person is actively participating in substance abuse treatment shall not be counted towards the twelve-month limit."

SECTION 2. Section 346-53, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

a) ~~This subsection does not apply to general assistance to households without minor dependents.~~ The standard of need shall equal the poverty level established by the federal government in 2006, prorated over a twelve-month period based on family size.

The assistance allowance provided shall be based on a percentage of the standard of need. For exempt households and households in which all caretaker relatives are minors, living independently with minor dependents and attending school, the assistance allowance shall be set no higher than sixty-two and one-half per cent and no lower than forty-four per cent of the standard of need. For all other households, the assistance allowance shall be set no higher than sixty-two and one-half per cent of the standard of need and set no lower than thirty-four per cent of the standard of need. The standard of need shall be determined by dividing the 2006 federal poverty level by twelve and rounding down the quotient. The remaining quotient shall be multiplied by the per cent as set by the director by rules pursuant to chapter 91, and the final product shall be rounded down to determine the assistance allowance; provided that:

(1) The department may increase or reduce the assistance allowance as determined in this subsection for non-exempt households for the purpose of providing work incentives or services under part XI;

(2) No reduction shall be allowed that jeopardizes eligibility for or receipt of federal funds;

(3) Reductions in the assistance allowance shall be limited to no more than one per year; and

(4) No non-exempt household, which includes an adult who has received sixty cumulative months of temporary assistance to needy families with minor dependents, shall be eligible for an assistance allowance, unless authorized by federal regulations.

~~[(b) The director shall determine the allowance for general assistance to households without minor dependents based upon the total amount appropriated for general assistance to households without minor dependents, among other relevant factors.]~~

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2009.



**Waianae Community Outreach**

*P.O. Box 1912, Waianae, HI 96792  
Ph: (808) 696-5667 Fax: (808) 696-1869*

**HOPE for a New Beginning Shelter  
(Helping Our People Excel)**

*Bldg 50 Belleau Woods, Kapolei, HI 96707  
Ph: (808) 682-4673 Fax: (808) 682-4670*

**Partnerships in Building Community**

**"I put my hand in your hand, what I cannot do alone, we will do together"**

Date: March 18, 2009

To: Sen. S. Chun-Oakland, Chair Human Services Committee  
Sen. L. Ihara Jr., Vice Chair Human Services Committee

Hearing: March 19, 2009 2:15pm Rm: 016

**Re: HB1098HD2: RELATING TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and committee members:

My name is Kanani Kaaiawahia Bulawan. I'm the administrative advisor to the board of directors' for Waianae Community Outreach. I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** this and ask that you pass it.

Individuals who are not determined disabled whether physical or mental for more than 24 months should be able to secure some form of employment or engage in activities that would lead towards gainful employment and sustainable income. Far many individuals become dependent on a system that is designed for failure. This is what our "welfare" system has become. Rather than a system which provides a "hand up" we have given individuals the mentality of a "hand out" and entitlement process.

In review of the measure, I support the passing of this and am assured that those who are most needy of this program will be given and those that are only seeking a hand out will learn in a short period of time they need to gain a life.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony. Should you have any questions or need additional information feel free to call me at 682-4673 or 783-9302.

Mahalo,

**Mission**  
Provide Comprehensive services with Aloha to individuals & families in need so they can become Self-Sufficient

**Vision**  
Healthy Self-Sufficient Resilient Individuals & Families

**Values**  
**U**nderstanding  
**R**espect  
**R**esponsibility  
**I**ntegrity  
**C**ompassion  
**H**onesty



HB1098,HD2, Relating to GA  
HMS; Chair, Sen Chun-Oakland

**PLEASE PASS THIS BILL WITH NO AMENDMENTS (see below for reason)!**

(I am really sorry to miss this hearing due to a minor medical procedure at the same time as the hearing.)

I have been testifying on GA since 1996 when GA became a block grant, hoping to move it back to an entitlement program. With this bill, my hope for GA clients can come true. Among other provisions, this bill in the first paragraph allows General Assistance to be removed from block grant status to become an entitlement program. This was done, as can be seen in the Finance Committee's report to the Speaker, with full awareness of House leaders who were, at best, lukewarm to changing GA from a block grant.

The importance of this change cannot be overstated. GA clients are subject to more discrimination than any other group of clients. They are cast-away people whom most decision-makers seem not to care about, as witness the horrific cuts in GA from \$469 to \$234 that will occur next month. One of the reasons for these cuts is GA's status as a block grant that is almost impossible to supplement.

This bill can end that discrimination by restoring GA to entitlement program. I am very happy to trade the 24 month time limit to get GA back to an entitlement program to protect these most vulnerable of our neighbors.

**Here is why I am asking that this bill be passed without amendment: If the Senate amends the bill, it will have to go to Conference Committee where anything can happen, including second thoughts by the House.** So, please pass and advocate for this bill passing as is when it goes to WAM.

Thank you very much for your advocacy efforts on behalf of GA clients.

Aloha, joel

Dr. Joel Fischer, ACSW  
Professor  
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work  
Henke Hall  
Honolulu, HI 96822

Nicole Holler  
March 17, 2009  
Organization: Individual  
Testify: support  
HB 1098 HD 2

Aloha Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair Senator Les Ihara, Vice chair, and members of the committee. My name is Nicole Holler. I am a student at the University of Hawaii. I am in the masters program in social work and I am a member of NASW. I am testifying in support of bill HB 1098 HD 2.

This bill requires DHS to refer general assistance recipients to the aged, blind, and permanently and totally disabled program under specific conditions. This will ensure that people who need the services will not be overlooked because DHS is now required to refer people who are under specific conditions. This bill is also turning general assistance into an entitlement program. This will guarantee a certain level of benefits to each person. This will benefit the aged, blind, and permanently and totally disabled population greatly.

Thank you for allowing me to testify on bill HB 1098. I strongly urge you to support this bill.

Testimony for HB1098

Camille Rockett, Masters of Social Work Student, UH Manoa

Before the Senate Committee on Human Services

Wednesday, March 19, 2009

PLEASE PASS THIS BILL!

I am writing to support the passage of **HB1098 HD1**, unamended, to change General Assistance to an entitlement program.

I am a Master's student in the School of Social Work at UH Manoa, a born and raised Hawaii resident, and a mother.

The monthly allowance for individuals receiving GA has been decreased by half due to the state of our economy and the nature of GA's funding. Because of the block grant program that GA is, it is subject to significant shortfalls due to the increased amount of qualifying residents without the ability to increase the amount of the grant. Cutting GA benefits is disastrous both for recipients and the community.

When the residents see their income halved in the coming months, their plight will undoubtedly create more problems as the state has no infrastructure for caring for these individuals should they be evicted from housing or unable to afford to care for themselves.

The main issue here is the state wants to cut funds from our poor and needy brothers and sisters while allowing the rich residents of Hawaii to continue to relax in their comfortable lifestyles. Taking money from people who have none and are not able to access the same opportunities as the rich, healthy, and advantaged is simply immoral. At the same time, providing continued support to a population that is unable to "fit in" to our economic structure on their own will prevent larger costs to our state in the future. The way to right this systemic wrong is to convert the block grant to an entitlement program.

Please realize that cutting GA benefits will harm real people and real families who are already struggling and facing difficulty in day to day life. Slashing aid to this part of our community sends the message to our keiki that it is ok to treat people who have disabilities with disrespect. It is not ok to punish people for things they have little control over, like mental illness or disability. It is not ok to say that these people are less deserving of living a full and happy life.

I strongly support this bill, and plead that you will pass HB1098, HD1.

Date: March 18, 2009

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES  
Sen. Suzanne Chun Oaklan, Chair  
Sen. Les Ihara, Vice-Chair

From: Teresa Bill ph: 956-9313

Re: HB1098, HD2 relating to General Assistance  
Thurs. March 19, 2009 2:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 016 1 copy to Committee Clerk, room 226

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My name is Teresa Bill. **I support HB 1098, HD2 with reservations. SB 1668 is preferable**, which combines AABD and GA into a single entitlement program.

The General Assistance program is an important part of Hawai'i's safety net which allows individuals without minor dependents to receive some financial assistance while temporarily disabled (more than 60 days). Currently there is no time limit on participation. One impetus for the Dept. to implement a 24-month time limit is because many individuals are actually in the process of applying for federal disability benefits through Social Security Disability Insurance. This HD2 includes amendments to give 24-months of eligibility.

This HD2 also changes the nature of funding for General Assistance from a "block grant appropriation" to a straight entitlement program which would mirror the AABD (Aged, Blind and Permanently Disabled) program. This addresses the disjuncture between the funding mechanisms for GA and the AABD programs. Changing General Assistance from a block grant would mean that individuals would not have to worry about whether their monthly assistance will be maintained throughout the full year; that assistance levels would be maintained at the current \$469 per month which is 50% of the 2006 Federal Poverty Level.

In April the Dept. of Human Services will decrease payments nearly half (from \$469 to \$235) to General Assistance recipients because of a lack of funding related to the "block grant appropriation." The Dept. has made a great effort to maintain General Assistance payments, and taking General Assistance off a "block grant" would make this effort easier.

While I prefer SB 1688 which also changes the funding for General Assistance I support HB1098, HD2 with the intention of keeping some vehicle alive to accomplish this goal.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

March 19, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: The Honorable Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 1098, H.D. 2 - RELATING TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

Hearing: Thursday, March 19, 2009; 2:15 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of H.B. 1098, H.D. 2 is to establish a twenty-four month time limit to households without minor dependents with appropriate exceptions. This bill requires the Department of Human Services to refer general assistance recipients to the aged, blind, and permanently and totally disabled program under specified conditions. It also converts general assistance into an entitlement program.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully opposes the amendments made in H.D. 1 of this Administration-sponsored bill. The general assistance program is meant to provide cash benefits for food, clothing, shelter, and other essentials to individuals, ages 18 through 64 without minor dependents, who are temporarily disabled and who do not qualify for Social Security benefits. Assistance is provided while the temporarily disabled individual recovers sufficiently to return to work or, if permanently disabled, is determined to be qualified as eligible for Federal Social Security benefits.

DHS recommends a twelve-month time limit for general assistance recipients, with the following exceptions:

- 1) The twelve-month time limit can be extended pending determination of the general assistance recipient's eligibility for the Federal Supplemental Security Income Program or its successor program and until all appeals with the Social Security Administration have been exhausted; and
- 2) A one-time extension of up to twelve consecutive months, for a total of not more than twenty-four months, shall be allowed for those general assistance recipients whose only disability is any substance abuse addiction and who remain compliant with the Department's recommended treatment program, including random drug testing.

It is expected that within our proposed twelve-month or twenty-four month time limits, the temporarily disabled client will be able to return to work or be qualified for federal Social Security benefits.

The general assistance program caseload has been increasing. The increased caseload is the result of not only more individuals receiving general assistance but also because those who are receiving assistance are on longer because the Federal eligibility process for the Federal Social Security benefits is taking longer. Also, the assistance payment for general assistance increased from \$418 monthly to \$469 monthly to be comparable with the assistance being received in the other financial assistance programs. For this fiscal year 2009, the Department, after exhausting all means to continue to provide benefits, will have to reduce assistance payments to \$234 monthly for the last three months of the fiscal year to be able to provide recipients some cash assistance through June 30, 2009.

These time limits will allow the Department to provide the maximum amount of assistance to clients while they are in their recovery or transition period.

The Department also has concerns about mandating referrals of general assistance recipients who are not 65 to the Aged, Blind and Permanently and Totally Disabled program (AABD) because the eligibility requirements of the general assistance and AABD program are different which may cause confusion as to who can be referred and qualified.

A final recommendation is that §346-71(b)(3)(C) on page 11, lines 5 through 15 be deleted as the Department's new evaluation process will preclude the need for this additional notice and the corresponding delays in processing the denial because the applicant does not have a disability.

In closing, the Department has been and will continue to work closely with the Financial Assistance Advisory Committee (FAAC) toward a combined GA and AABD program but we need the opportunity to gather and analyze relevant data to develop a combined program. The Department hopes to submit a proposal, supported by the FAAC, during the 2010 Legislative Session which will ensure that the requirements for both the AABD and the GA programs are clearly defined, compatible, reasonable and sustainable in combining these two important programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



**BY EMAIL:** [HMStestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:HMStestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
Committee: Committee on Human Services  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, March 19, 2009, 2:15 p.m.  
Place: Room 016  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Opposition to H.B. 1098, HD2, Relating to General Assistance

Dear Chair Chun Oakland and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii ("ACLU of Hawaii") writes in opposition to H.B. 1098, HD2, which seeks to place a 24-month limit on general assistance to households without minor dependents.

This bill severely and unnecessarily punishes poor people. In this time of high and rising unemployment and housing prices, we should not be considering ways to restrict assistance to poor individuals, some of our most vulnerable citizens. Restricting general assistance access to these already low-income individuals will stretch our homeless resources to the breaking point and cost us much more in the long run. Hawaii would be better served by providing support to individuals and families seeking to transition out of general assistance.

The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for over 40 years.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Daniel M. Gluck  
Senior Staff Attorney  
ACLU of Hawaii

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii  
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Honolulu, Hawaii 96801  
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