

LATE TESTIMONY

**House Committee on Housing**  
Wednesday, February 04, 2009, 9:00 a.m. CR 325

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1187**

Rep. Rida Cabanilla, Chair and Rep. Pono Chong Vice Chair and members of the HSG committee,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in strong support for HB 1187.

I am Ilalo Parayno, a retired educator and spend 40 in the DOE as a teacher and administrator.

This bill will go a long ways to help those stranded re-unite with their families where they can obtain family support and friends support in job training and job search.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2009  
**WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Rep. Rida Cabanilla, Chair    Rep. Pono Chong, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 4, 2009

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PLACE: Conference Room 325

State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street

My name is Jessica Lani Rich and I am the President & Executive Director of the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii, also known as VASH for short. We are a non-profit agency dealing with visitors in emergency situations.

**I am testifying relating to House Bill 1187 and I am in favor of this bill.** The reason I support this bill is that our office provides assistance to hundreds of visitors in crisis every year. We deal with visitors who are victims of crimes, which include having their car broken into; to visitors who even die while they are on vacation for numerous reasons. Our office is contacted on a regular basis by people who started out as visitors but then became homeless. Many of these visitors have children and find themselves in homeless shelters.

The Visitor Aloha Society does not purchase airline tickets for visitors. Visitors must have a round-trip ticket to qualify for our services but most people don't know that so they call us for help. Our office has been asked for assistance from 18 year old young women who respond to jobs on the internet and when they get here the work was not what they expected. They come from families who cannot afford to send them back home so they become homeless. We fear that these young women could land up on the streets as prostitutes if they are not helped with airline tickets. Our office has also been asked to assist families who come to Hawaii on vacation and don't buy a round trip ticket, if they are robbed, they also land up in a homeless shelter. Another common problem is visitors who go online for vacation rentals and will pay hundreds of dollars only to find out that they have no place to stay. These people also land up homeless.

A most recent case we assisted involved a 79 year old man who came here as a visitor with no round-trip ticket. If there were funds available, he could have been sent home to his family. If the state could help out many people who are in homeless shelters by buying them a ticket home, not only is it a humane thing to do but it is also very cost effective. We are in the front line helping visitors in crisis who said if they could only have a ticket home it would solve their problem of homelessness and isolation. Many have a better life waiting for them back home. I am in support of House Bill 1187 because it assists the homeless in reuniting with their family members. They would not have to suffer if they had plane tickets. On behalf of the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii, I thank you.

Submitted by Jessica Lani Rich, President & Executive Director  
Visitor Aloha Society of Hawaii, Waikiki Shopping Plaza, 2250 Kalakaua Avenue Suite 403-3  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815  
Telephone: 808-926-8274  
Fax: 808-926-0500

# LATE TESTIMONY

Statement of Claire Kasher Hawaii resident before the House Committee on Housing February 4, 2009  
9:00 am Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol. In consideration of HB 1187 relating to Public Housing.

I am In support of the intent of HB 1187, which provides for a return-to-home program for persons stranded in this State. Our state is overloaded with people coming here with nothing to give. People coming from the Mainland with no money, no job and no place to stay and are unprepared to handle life and into drugs and become street people sleeping in beaches, bus stops, churches, knapsacks and they litter our place. People who are considered legitimate homeless are those who lost their homes due to fires, flood, and other calamities and even foreclosures. Good weather, food stamps and welfare are the main reasons why people come to Hawaii uses Hawaii resources such as medical, food and public housing and other resources that eventually pose difficulties to taxpayers who are trying to make ends meet with the high cost of living in our State. This bill is voluntary and can help in the reunification of families where they can get support while they gain the necessary job skills to stand on their own feet.