



**STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY  
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 17907  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

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

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**

February 4, 2009 9:00 a.m.  
Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of  
**H.B. 1692**  
**RELATING TO HOUSING**

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports the intent of H.B. 1692, to encourage upward mobility, prevent multigenerational tenancy, and increase the supply of low income housing. H.B. 1692 would restrict leases to tenants for no more than 5 years (except tenants 55 years and older, with mental or physical disabilities, or retired for medical reasons) for 1) state public housing units, and 2) federal public housing units. However, more discussion of this issue and planning is needed before passage.

- 1) State public housing units. The Legislature can decide to restrict length of leases to tenants for the 288 state family public housing units. However, planning for how such a transition will impact current tenants should be done in light of the continuum of housing resources available.
- 2) Federal public housing units. The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) provides federal operating/utility subsidies and capital funds for the 5,363 federal public housing units in Hawaii. HUD does not allow limitation on the number of years a tenant in good standing may stay in federal public housing. However, HUD allows 32 public housing authorities nationwide (out of more than 3,000) in its Moving To Work program to experiment with improving public housing through innovations such as increasing rents and limiting a tenant's time in public housing. HPHA has not been designated a Moving To Work agency, although the HPHA board will be considering whether to pursue this status in the months to come. Even if HPHA were to attain Moving to Work status time would be needed to plan for strategic changes before implementing new procedures and rules.

To: Representative Rida Cabanilla, Chair,  
Representative Pono Chong, Vice Chair  
Committee on Housing

From: Community Alliance Partners  
Hawai'i Island Continuum of Care to End Homelessness  
(808) 933-6033 [hawaiicap@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiicap@gmail.com)

HSG Public Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 4, 2009 (9:00 a.m.) CR 325

**Opposed to HB 1692 RELATING TO HOUSING**

Dear Chair Cabanilla, Vice Chair Chong, and members of the Committee on Housing:

Community Alliance Partners (CAP), the Continuum of Care for the Island of Hawai'i, is a broad based consortium of social service providers and community members working together to address the issue of homelessness. These efforts are centered on collaboration to support the development of a spectrum of resources and services to assist those affected by homelessness in obtaining and maintaining sustainable housing and achieving economic self-sufficiency.

**CAP is writing in OPPOSITION to HB 1692 which would impose a 5 year limit for all public housing except for people who are elderly, disabled, or retired for medical reasons.**

A comprehensive approach is needed to help address the challenges of generational dependence on public housing. This effort must consider the development of adequate affordable housing inventory and the introduction of systems which provide incentive for households working to increase their income, and support services to help prepare them for the transition to market housing.

Without putting structures in place to facilitate "upward economic mobility" the isolated imposition of a 5-year limit will result in the opposite outcome, as numerous unprepared families become displaced back into homelessness.

We encourage the committee not to pass HB 1692 at this time, and would look forward to the opportunity to continue dialogue to develop a comprehensive plan to address this important issue.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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**From:** Betty Lou Larson [BettyLou@catholiccharitieshawaii.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 03, 2009 9:59 AM  
**To:** HSGtestimony  
**Subject:** HB 1692- TESTIMONY for 2/4/09, 9:00 am, Housing Committee



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**TESTIMONY- OPPOSE HB 1692: RELATING TO HOUSING**

**TO:** **Representative Rida Cabanilla, Chair**, Representative Pono Chong, Vice Chair, and Members, House Committee on Housing

**FROM:** Betty Lou Larson, Housing Programs Director, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

**HEARING:** Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 9:00 am; CR 325

Chair Cabanilla, Vice Chair Chong, and members of the Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on this housing bill. I am Betty Lou Larson, the Housing Programs Director at Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also members of Partners in Care. Catholic Charities Hawai'i **OPPOSES** this bill which would impose a 5 year limit for all public housing except for people who are elderly, disabled, or retired for medical reasons.

While we agree with the concerns expressed in the Purpose section, this draconian measure should be a last step, not a first step to address these long-standing issues. In order to break the cycle of generation after generation living in public housing, first there must be a concerted effort and adequate funding to provide the services needed to move families onto market housing. If there is no affordable housing for people at 15% to 30% to 40% of median income, where would they go? There must be a plan and adequate programs implemented before a measure such as a 5 year limit should be considered. We suggest a Task Force to work on the complicated issues involved.

Development of such a plan needs time and input from HPHA, residents, and the community, including the homeless service providers. Partners in Care (Oahu continuum of service providers, government agencies, and persons concerned about homelessness) has begun to discuss this issue. Catholic Charities Hawai'i also has many programs that assist both homeless persons and those at risk to prevent homelessness.

There are many other issues that would need to be addressed in an overall plan. For example, Catholic Charities Hawai'i would support measures to increase rents as incomes increase, with no cap on the amount of rent that would be paid at 30% of income. We also would support that once families have reached a high level of income they should be counseling and assisted to move out. However, families may not be stable and may have wide swings in income, so care must be taken in developing the administrative rules to allow for stability in income, before forcing a family out of housing and possibly into homelessness.

We commend the Committee for taking on such a difficult and complex issue. However, we urge that an overall plan be developed before measures like a 5 year limit are considered. We urge the legislature to work with the HPHA, the residents and the community to developed future options to address these complicated issues. Thank you for hearing our concerns.



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

M. Nalani Fujimori, Esq.  
Interim Executive Director

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB1692 - RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING**

February 4, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii hereby provides testimony to the House Committee on Housing in opposition of HB1694 – Relating to Public Housing.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii provides free legal services to the low-income population of the State of Hawaii. In addition to providing services to clients who currently reside in public housing, we also assist individuals who are on the waiting list to gain access to public housing. In 2008, we received over three hundred calls requesting assistance on public housing matters and represented approximately thirty or 10% of these callers in administrative and/or court hearings. Many of our clients are on limited, fixed incomes such as Social Security, General Assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Many of our clients are also victims of domestic violence, homeless and a few are displaced persons.

This bill would limit occupancy in public housing to a five year period except for persons 55 years and older, persons with a mental or physical disability, or retired for medical reasons.

While we appreciate the intent of this measure, we are concerned that the provisions will have an unintended impact on families of limited resources and will limit the public housing's authority to determine the admission of tenants to shelter based on actual need.

**WHO SHOULD RECEIVE THE LIMITED AMOUNTS OF HOUSING SUBSIDIES?**

The housing subsidy programs have never appropriated sufficient funding to provide subsidies to all eligible persons. As a result, the number of eligible households far exceeds the number of available units. This lack of sufficient funding to serve all who need assistance has created disputes about who should receive the limited subsidies available. The history of low-income housing programs shows numerous examples of efforts to shift the subsidy focus away from those with the lowest incomes and the greatest need to those who have a much better chance to succeed in the private housing market.

This current bill would necessitate government funds to alleviate the persistent problems facing low income families including the lack of jobs, inadequate income, and poor educational and health services. In short, people cannot improve their lives by the knowledge that they will become homeless. They will need job training, available jobs and access to adequate health and educational services. Many people in public housing are already employed. Unfortunately, the jobs provide low income and limited opportunity for advancement. A person making minimum wage cannot afford housing in the private market. This bill will result in families with limited opportunities to become homeless.

This bill would necessitate a coordinated approach to solving the problems of poverty. Efforts need to be planned and long-term solutions sought to effectively challenge this age-old problem.

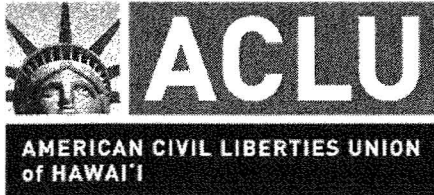
Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Sheila P. Lippolt





**BY EMAIL: HSGtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov**

Committee: Committee on Housing  
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, February 4, 2009, 9:00 a.m.  
Place: Room 325  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Opposition to H.B. 1692, Relating to Housing

Dear Chair Cabanilla and Members of the Committee on Housing:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in opposition to H.B.1692, which seeks to restrict federal and state low income housing leases in certain cases to no more than five years.

This bill severely and unnecessarily punishes poor families. In this time of high and rising unemployment and housing prices, we should not be considering ways to evict public housing tenants, some of our most vulnerable citizens. Evicting these already low-income families 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 public housing units.

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,

Laurie A. Temple  
Staff Attorney  
ACLU of Hawaii

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