

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



CHAD K. TANIGUCHI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## 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 FINANCE

March 2, 2009 1:30 p.m.  
Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of  
**H.B. 1694**  
**RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING**

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports the intent of H.B. 1694, which would 1) establish a minimum rent amount of \$250 for tenants in state public housing, 2) require HPHA to seek full reimbursement for tenant-caused damages in public housing, and 3) prohibit HPHA from establishing preferences in tenant selection, other than veterans preferences, in state public housing.

1. Minimum Rents: HPHA agrees with the concept of a minimum contribution by all tenants. The current minimum rent structure by bedroom size is attached for the 288 state family units and 576 state elderly units. HPHA is required by statute (HRS 356D-43(a)) to have the rents pay for all expenses of the state family and state elderly housing. HPHA has not raised the minimum rents since 2001 for state family units and since 2005 for state elderly units. HPHA can set the \$250 minimum rent for new tenants, but requests that it be allowed to phase in higher rents for current tenants over a four year period. Otherwise the rate of increase will too fast. The minimum rents should be based on number of bedrooms and there should be an ongoing process to raise the rents to meet expenses as they rise, such as the CPI indexing in the current measure.
2. Full Reimbursement: HPHA currently seeks reimbursement for tenant-caused damages and needs to increase the labor rate from \$11 per hour to \$35 per hour.
3. No Preferences, other than veterans: The Legislature or the HPHA Board can make a determination on preferences for both state and federal public housing. The bill as drafted only applies this requirement to state housing.

EXHIBIT C

MINIMUM RENTS FOR  
STATE-AIDED FAMILY PUBLIC HOUSING PROJECTS  
(Effective DEC 13 2001)

The Minimum Monthly rents for all tenants of State-aided family public housing projects are as follows:

No. of Bedrooms	Monthly Minimum Rent
1	\$108
2	128
3	152
4	180
5	212



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

**OPPOSE/COMMENTS - HB 1694, HD1: RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING**

TO: Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair, Representative Marilyn Lee,  
Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Finance

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Housing Programs Director, Catholic Charities Hawaii

HEARING: **Monday, March 2, 2009; 1:30 pm; CR 308**

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee , and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this public housing bill. I am Betty Lou Larson, the Housing Programs Director at Catholic Charities Hawaii. We are also members of Partners in Care. Catholic Charities Hawaii OPPOSES the section of this bill which would prohibit the establishment of preferences for the selection of tenants. We support the intent of the section that would establish a minimum rent.

We urge you to **delete the prohibition on preferences**: Currently the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA)'s rules provide for a preference for homeless individuals and families who are working with a transitional housing program and following their service plan to get their lives back on track. Without this preference, the families would have very few options for affordable housing and many would remain homeless. Public Housing is an essential resource for the State to combat homelessness, and the homeless preference is a key tool in facilitating the forward momentum of families working to improve their lives.

Neighborhoods see more homeless sleeping in their parks and streets. Beach goers want the homeless off the beaches. WHERE CAN THEY GO? Without affordable housing, the State cannot work to resolve homelessness. Most of the families at the Ma'ili Land Transitional Housing Program operated by Catholic Charities Hawaii are working! Our experience there is that without affordable housing, especially public housing, the outlook would be very grim for families to transition out within two years. With rents having doubled or tripled even in the Waianae area, there are few affordable rentals out in the market. Until adequate affordable housing projects are brought on-line, public housing remains one of the few resources that the State has to reduce homelessness.

RE: Minimum Rents: Knowing the many challenges facing the State's housing projects, we would support a fair minimum rent that would be used to help ensure housing is safe, in good repair, and provides dignity to the tenants. A minimum rent would assist the housing projects to stabilize their rental income. However, there also must be flexibility in the implementation with existing tenants. We are concerned that current tenants who are responsibly paying rent not be driven into homelessness.

We urge you not to change the tenant selection rules. HPHA's preference for homeless is critical to maintain, until more affordable rental units are actually built.



**A JOINT LEGISLATIVE EFFORT**

Submitted via WEB:  
Regarding: House Finance Committee  
Hearing on: March 2, 2009 @ 1:30 p.m. in room #308  
Copies Necessary: 2 copies

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**Date:** February 27, 2009

**To:** House Committee on Finance  
Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair  
Rep. Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair

**From:** Dennis Arakaki  
Executive Director  
Hawaii Family Forum / Hawaii Catholic Conference

**Re:** **COMMENTS on HB 1694 HD 1 Relating to Public Housing**

Honorable Chair and members of the House Committee on Finance, I am Dennis Arakaki, representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii.

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii. The Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii, under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 220,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

The Hawaii Catholic Conference and Hawaii Family Forum would like to make some comments on HB 1694, relating to public housing. Along with our community partner, Catholic Charities Hawai'i, we oppose the section of this bill which would prohibit the establishment of preferences for the selection of tenants; however, we support the intent of the section that would establish a minimum rent.

**We urge you to delete the prohibition on preferences:**

Currently the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA)'s rules provide for a preference for homeless individuals and families who are working with a transitional housing program and following their service plan to get their lives back on track. Without this preference, the families would have very few options for affordable housing and many would remain homeless. Public Housing is an essential resource for the State to combat homelessness, and the homeless preference is a key tool in facilitating the forward momentum of families working to improve their lives.

HB 1694 HD 1 Relating to Public Housing  
Page Two

Neighborhoods see more homeless sleeping in their parks and streets. Beach goers want the homeless off the beaches. WHERE CAN THEY GO? Without affordable housing, the State cannot work to resolve homelessness. Most of the families at the Ma'ili Land Transitional Housing Program operated by Catholic Charities Hawai'i are working! Without affordable housing, especially public housing, the outlook is very grim for families to transition out within two years. With rents having doubled or tripled even in the Waianae area, there are few affordable rentals out in the market. Until adequate affordable housing projects are brought on-line, public housing remains one of the few resources that the State has to reduce homelessness.

RE: Minimum Rents:

Knowing the many challenges facing the State's housing projects, we would support a fair minimum rent that would be used to help ensure housing is safe, in good repair, and provides dignity to the tenants. A minimum rent would assist the housing projects to stabilize their rental income. However, there also must be flexibility in the implementation with existing tenants. We are concerned that current tenants who are responsibly paying rent not be driven into homelessness.

We urge you not to change the tenant selection rules. HPHA's preference for homeless is critical to maintain, until more affordable rental units are actually built.

To: Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair,  
Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair  
Committee on Finance

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

FIN Public Hearing Date: Monday, March 2, 2009 (1:30 p.m.) CR 308

**HB 1694 RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING  
Opposition to Removal of Homeless Preference**

Dear Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the Committee on Finance:

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 develop a spectrum of resources to assist those affected by homelessness in obtaining and maintaining sustainable housing and achieving economic self-sufficiency.

**CAP is writing to OPPOSE the section of HB 1694 which would prohibit HPHA to establish preferences for the selection of tenants in public housing.**

The removal of the homeless preference for public housing will result in extended periods of time for individuals and families to remain unsheltered, increasing their exposure to the highest risk factors. If individuals in homeless programs are no longer placed as a high priority for public housing it will limit access to emergency and transitional shelter services, as participants will increasingly stay for the full extent of the program duration, as they struggle to compete for extremely limited inventory of affordable housing in the community.

Current guidelines allow for a preference status for persons who are homeless and are working with service providers to resolve obstacles to their stability. This preference provides a key avenue to assist individuals and families in the most severe situations to access affordable housing which can provide the foundation of support to help them continue their progress. Public Housing is an essential resource in the Continuum of Care, and the homeless preference is an important in facilitating the forward momentum of those working to improve their lives.

**We urge the committee to delete the prohibition on preferences for public housing to retain this tool as a key step in reducing homelessness.** We support the section of this measure which would establish a minimum rent, and encourage continuing collaboration with service providers to developing support services to help families continue the transition on into the mainstream housing market and greater independence.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1694

FIN Committee

Rep. Oshiro, Chair, and Rep. Lee, Vice Chair

March 2, 2009, 1:30 pm, Conference room 308

The Institute for Human Services is the largest emergency homeless shelter on the island of Oahu. **IHS** is committed to working with the legislature in identifying strategic and realistic solutions to the homelessness crisis in the State of Hawaii. We appreciate the hard work the finance committee has done in exploring solutions to these critical problems.

The Institute for Human Services urges the members of the Committee on Consumer Affairs to vote **in favor** of HB1694. Passing legislation that would prohibit HPHA from establishing preferences for tenant selection would help to ensure that only individuals truly in need would reside at homeless shelters such as IHS. Additionally, we urge the committee to amend this bill to establish a minimum rent of \$250 for state public housing units and \$50 for federal public housing units, as the original bill stated. We feel that establishing a minimum rent is an important step in urging people to seek jobs, and to avoid perpetuating unemployment in order to maintain free housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

House Committee on Finance  
Monday, March 2, 2009 at 10:00 am CR 308  
In Support of HB 1694-relating to Public Housing

Aloha Chair Marcus Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn Lee and members of Finance Committee.

I am Flor Martinez, a radio announcer at KNDI radio. I am testifying in support of HB 1694 that mandates minimum contribution by tenants that will provide landlord resources to be used in maintaining housing facilities to be safe, in good condition and will provide dignity to the tenant. Rental income will also assist the housing projects to stabilize. Public housing should serve as a transitional stage for individuals to incentivize them to look for a better job and do better in life.

Tenant selection rules will facilitate the transition of families out of the program and will prevent extended period of time for individuals and families to remain unsheltered and increased exposure to circumstances of the highest risk factors.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



House Committee on Finance  
Monday, March 2, 2009 at 10:00 am CR 308  
In Support of HB 1694-Relating to Public Housing

Aloha Chair Marcus Oshiro, Vice Chair Marilyn Lee and members of the Finance committee.

I am Christopher Manabat testifying in support of HB1694, a bill that will mandate for minimum rent at our public housing projects is useful to help ensure that housing facilities are well kept. With the diminishing federal funding and low state revenues, maintenance of public housing facilities will deteriorate in no time. Minimum contribution by all tenants and an ongoing process to raise the rents will enable landlord to meet expenses as they rise. A collaborative effort by HPHA, residents and the community will prevent the solvency of rental projects that tax payers and the government let alone cannot do.

There should be flexibility in the selection preference to ensure fairness to those who have been in the wait list for quiet period of time and to prevent populating public housing with homeless people that will defeat the purpose of mixed used concept.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATIVE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2009

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Chair: Representative Marcus Oshiro                      Vice Chair Marilyn Lee  
And Members of the Judiciary Committee

DATE: Monday, March 02, 2009  
TIME: 1:30pm  
PLACE: Conference Room 308  
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of  
HB 1694  
Relating to  
PUBLIC HOUSING

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My name is Dr. Inam Rahman, a resident of Honolulu, Hawaii for the last 15 years. I support the intent of this bill to provide affordable housing that is decent and secure to working people with low income.

A minimal rental requirement provides a win- win situation between tenant and landlord. It encourages working people to strive and better themselves and deters them to become homeless and at the same time provides landlord revenues to continue in maintaining a better living condition.

Our disabled veterans on the other hand who have served and protected us and our country should be given preference of tenancy in the rental units and not let them become homeless as a means of our appreciation to them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Inam Rahman, MD .