

nishimoto2-Bryce

From: manis [manis@lava.net]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2009 11:29 AM
To: HLTtestimony
Subject: Testimony HCR 14 Grandparents
Attachments: HCR 14 Grandparents Housing

Testimony below is same as attachment, in case you can't open it. Laura Manis

Kokua Council
Hawaii's Voice for a Better Future
597-8838

Testifier: Laura Manis, tel.

HLTtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov.

Hearing by House Committees on Health and on Human Resources
March 17, 2009, 10:45 a.m. Conference Room 329

Chair Ryan I. Yamane and Members, Committee on Health Chair John Mizuno, and Members,
Committee on Human Resources

HCR 14 REQUESTING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES TO MAKE APPROPRIATE EXEMPTIONS FOR GRANDPARENTS
CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN TO REMAIN IN SENIOR HOUSING UNTIL SUITABLE HOUSING IS OBTAINED.

STRONGLY SUPPORT

Kokua Council supports this request. This resolution fits our mission to shape the well-being of our community and advocate for seniors.

We have learned from our members that because of restrictions at elderly public housing, when it becomes suddenly necessary to house their grandchildren, they must make other housing arrangements.

Because of a shortage of affordable housing it often takes longer than the amount of time allowed under present rules. We therefore believe it would be in the best interest of all concerned if the time was extended to a more reasonable period.

Laura Manis, Legislative Chair
Kokua Council, 597-8838

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA

School of Social Work

**Testimony to the Joint House Committee on Health and Human Services
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Conference Room 329; 10:45am**

**RE: H.C.R. No. 14, REQUESTING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES TO
MAKE APPROPRIATE EXEMPTIONS FOR GRANDPARENTS CARING
FOR GRANDCHILDREN TO REMAIN IN SENIOR HOUSING UNTIL
SUITABLE HOUSING IS OBTAINED.**

Chairs Yamane and Mizuno, and Members of the Joint Committee,

My name is Wes Lum and I am testifying in support of this measure. I am an Assistant Specialist with the University of Hawaii Center on Aging. My testimony represents my personal opinion and does not reflect the position of the University of Hawaii nor of the Center on Aging.

This resolution requests that all public and private senior housing agencies identify all residents who are the sole or primary caretakers for a grandchild to make appropriate exemptions in policies, procedures, and house rules to allow seniors who provide sole or primary care for one or more grandchildren to remain in their rental unit until more suitable housing is obtained.

As an appointed member of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force (Task Force) that convened during the 2008 Legislative interim, I fully support this measure.

The Task Force reviewed a report to Congress, issued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on "Intergenerational Housing Needs and HUD Program Options." That report confirmed the need for increased intergenerational housing. While the Task Force is encouraged by the support and recommendation for the development of such housing, this does not eliminate the current need for relief for grandparents caring for children who live in federally exempt senior housing.

Federal housing discrimination laws (24 CFR 100.300 et. seq.) exempt certain senior housing projects from familial status protections. This means that qualified senior housing can evict a grandparent who takes in their grandchildren. Under federal guidelines, qualified senior housing projects have the option to evict a grandchild without any repercussions.

Locally, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority has issued a memo to its housing managers allowing children under the age of eighteen to reside in an elderly household until such time the entire household can be moved into a family unit. However, this is one of the few exceptions to the rule and applies only to public housing communities.

Therefore, this measure is essential to ensure that grandparents raising grandchildren are treated fairly and with respect in all senior housing units across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

IN SUPPORT

Providing Testimony for the Record

To the House Committees on Health regarding Hearing scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 2:00 PM, in Conference Room 329.

From Patricia Urieff, MSW, Licensed Social Worker with thirty years of experience working with children and their families; parent; and grandparent.

Regarding HCR 14, REQUESTING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES TO MAKE APPROPRIATE EXEMPTIONS FOR GRANDPARENTS CARING FOR GRANDCHILDREN TO REMAIN IN SENIOR HOUSING UNTIL SUITABLE HOUSING IS OBTAINED.

The 2007 Needs Assessment of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (for the Legislature) shows that over 14,000 GRG are primary caregivers for over 33,000 grandchildren in the Hawaii State and they save the state approximately 17 million dollars per month by caring for their grandchildren outside the foster care system.

The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Task Force (established into Law by 2008 Legislature) has discussed this issue, completed research, and found that House Rules made by managers result in eviction notices when eligible seniors get a grandchild-in-crisis who needs care. Result: some seniors are reported to live in cars with grandchild; some grandchildren went to state foster care when grandparents fear losing housing, and that cost taxpayers \$ 529 monthly for each child to live with strangers. Systems for housing seniors can/must be made to re-think rules very toxic to the aloha spirit.

Whenever a child-is-in-crisis because the parents can not or will not keep the child safe and provide care, in those cases when the child knows the grandparents and the grandparents want to provide care, they provide an important part in ensuring well-being of the children. In the process, grandparents experience “meaningful work”.

Barriers should not continue to exist because the managers of senior public and private housing made house rules that result in Eviction Notices to seniors coping with crisis.

Managers who send Eviction Notices to eligible seniors coping with a grandchild in crisis may be acting to please other seniors who want to live in apartment buildings where there are no children. Taxpayers support Public Senior Housing. Taxpayers want grandparents to take care of the grandchild-in-crisis rather let the child go to state foster care at a price of \$529 per child per month – provided by tax payers.

In the natural unfolding of life, family members live together. It is natural for grandparents care for grandchildren-in-crisis. What is unnatural is that today’s seniors live in Senior Housing that doesn’t allow children. Managers need to make exemptions for financially needy seniors who can not move out immediately or soon after. In addition, managers have expertise that could help grandparents find another affordable housing situation.