

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

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Chair: Rida Cabanilla Vice Chair Pono Chong
And Members of the Housing Committee

DATE: Wednesday, April 1, 2009
TIME: 9:00am
PLACE: Conference Room 325
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of HCR 283 Relating to PUBLIC HOUSING

I am Flor Martinez, of KNDI radio testifying for HCR 283. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this public housing bill. Public housing is definitely an essential resource for the state to alleviate homelessness. This measure to restrict tenants to lease for a minimum of 5 years with the exception of tenants 55 years and older, with mental and physical disabilities, or retired for medical reasons will prevent multigenerational tenancy. Homeless individuals and families who are working with a transitional housing program and following their service plan to get their lives back on track will benefit from this bill. However, without this ruling on preference, tenants of public housing can abuse either from not striving to improve their economic stability or will remain tenants even after the fact that they can transition to affordable housing or even market housing. This bill will not only prevent multigenerational tenancy, it will also encourage economic upward mobility and increase the supply of low income housing.

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In Support of HCR 283-Relating to PUBLIC HOUSING
WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Thank You for the opportunity to testify in strong support for HCR 283. I am Ilalo Parayno, a retired educator and spent 41 years with DOE as a teacher and administrator. In this challenging time of economic crisis, every effort to build more affordable housing is not feasible to solve generational dependence to public housing. This bill is a viable approach necessary not only to address this challenge but also to provide assistance to working individuals to help prepare them for the transition. Public Housing has been occupied by same families for generation. Given this convenience, disabled them to strive harder to become self sufficient. Without imposing conditional limit to their length of occupancy will not provide them incentive to become self supporting and will deter their upward economic mobility. This bill is intended for transitional public housing with the exemptions of truly needy individuals such as mental and/or physically disabled individuals, or retired for medical conditions for such reasons that they are incapacitated to improve their living conditions. Otherwise, occupants who remain in the transitional public housing for more than three generations will unfairly deny those 14,000 deserving individuals equal access the use of public housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 1692.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Chair: Rida Cabanilla Vice Chair Pono Chong
And Members of the Housing Committee

DATE: Wednesday, April 1, 2009
TIME: 9:00 am
PLACE: Conference Room 325
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of HCR 283-Relating to PUBLIC HOUSING

I am Christopher Manabat, testifying for HCR 283. Public Housing remains one of the few resources to reduce homelessness in the State. In an effort to minimize the challenging shortage due to the increasing demand of public housing, there should be a rule to mandate the limit of terms in transitional tenancy. A five year limit is reasonable length of lease time to tenants who are working towards economic stability and eventually be able to afford a market rent unit or for the purchase of an affordable unit. A support system of sustainability is absolutely necessary to help tenants during transition period with economic vitality, community stability and environmental health In addition to physical framework Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY- OPPOSE – HCR 283 & HR 255: URGING THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY TO INSITUTE A FIVE YEAR MAXIMUM STAY FOR PUBLIC 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 Hawaii

HEARING: Wednesday, April 1, 9:00 am; CR 325

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on these resolutions. 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 imposition of a 5 year limit for all public housing leases (even with the exception for people who are veterans, elderly, or disabled).

While we agree with the concerns expressed, 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 after 5 years? How will they be motivated to increase their incomes? How will they gain access to better jobs, etc.? 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 a plan to effectively address the complicated issues involved.

Development of an effective plan to move families out of public housing 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 brought their focus to this issue. Catholic Charities Hawaii and other programs that help homeless and lower income families would be willing to participate in such an initiative.

There are many other issues that would need to be addressed in an overall plan. For example, Catholic Charities Hawaii 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 certain 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.



A JOINT LEGISLATIVE EFFORT

E-Mail: HSGTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov
Regarding: House Committee on Housing
Hearing on: April 1, 2009 @ 8:00 a.m. in room 325

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Date: March 30, 2009
To: House Committee on Housing
Rep. Rida Cabanilla, Chair & Rep. Pono Chong, Vice Chair
From: Dennis Arakaki
Executive Director
Hawaii Family Forum / Hawaii Catholic Conference

Re: OPPOSITION TO HCR 283 / HR 255 URGING THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY TO INSTITUTE A FIVE YEAR MAXIMUM STAY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING.

Honorable Chair and members of the House Committee on Human Services, I am Dennis Arakaki, representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Hawaii Catholic Conference which is the public policy voice for 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.

We are opposed to this measure because this bill would impose a 5 year limit for all public housing except for people who are elderly, disabled or retired for medical reasons. We strongly urge that an overall plan be developed before measures like a 5 year limit are considered.

In order to break the cycle of multiple generations living in public housing, there must be adequate funding and a concerted effort 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 limit such as this is imposed.

We would support measures to encourage those who have increased their incomes to pay more as their income grows, with no cap on the amount of rent that would be paid (e.g. 30% of income). We also would support counseling and moving assistance once families have reached a higher level of income..We must keep in mind, however, that 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.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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

HSG Public Hearing Date: Wednesday, April 1, 9:00 am; CR 325

**OPPOSE: HCR283 & HR255
FIVE YEAR MAXIMUM STAY FOR PUBLIC 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 HCR283 & HR255 which would urge the imposition of a 5 year limit for public housing.

A comprehensive approach is needed to help address the challenges of generational dependence on public housing. In order to truly facilitate "upward economic mobility" this effort must consider:

- development of adequate affordable housing inventory (accessible to families of low income)
- introduction of systems which provide incentive for households working to increase their income
- support services to help prepare them for the transition to market housing.

The isolated imposition of a 5-year limit at this time will not achieve this goal, but result in the opposite outcome, as numerous unprepared families become displaced back into homelessness.

We encourage the committee not to pass HCR283 & HR255 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.

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 HOUSING

April 1, 2009 9:00 A.M.
Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
HCR 283 and HR255
**URGING THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY TO INSTITUTE A FIVE YEAR
MAXIMUM STAY FOR PUBLIC HOUSING**

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the intent HCR 283 and HR255, to restrict leases for tenants to no more than 5 years, with exceptions for the elderly and disabled, in order to encourage upward mobility, prevent multigenerational tenancy, and increase the supply of low income housing. However, more discussion with the HPHA Board of Directors would be necessary before such a restriction could be implemented.

It must be recognized that such a restriction could only be applied to the 288 state family public housing units; another 576 state public housing units are for the elderly, who would be exempt. Federal public housing regulations do not allow for a time limit on occupancy in the 5331 federal public housing units.