

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY FIFTH LEGISLATIVE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2010

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

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

Date: Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Time: 11:00 am

Place: Conference Room 325
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania St.
Honolulu, Hawaii

In Support of HB 2281
Relating to Elderly Housing

My name is Patrick Koh, a resident of Honolulu, Hawaii. I support the intent of this bill to amend the definition of "elder or elderly households" to follow in line with Social Security. Today's population is living longer and working longer there are more elderly that needs housing and with the limited availability of elderly housing units, this would crunch the already limited amount of elderly housing. This bill will enable housing units to be more available to elderly population in need of housing. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Statement of
Barbara E. Arashiro
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

January 27, 2010 11:00 A.M.
Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
HB 2281
RELATING TO ELDERLY HOUSING

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) opposes H.B. 2281, which would change the definition of "elder or elderly household" in Hawaii Revised Statutes §356D-1 so as to increase the minimum age for all persons living in state elderly housing from age 55 to age 62.

HPHA opposes this change because it would prevent slightly younger siblings or other relatives from continuing to reside with the head of household. We do not see any benefit in the proposed change, only disruption for some current residents of elderly housing.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY- COMMENTS RE: HB 2281: RELATING TO ELDERLY 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, January 27, 2010**, 11:00 am; CR 325

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this housing bill. I am Betty Lou Larson, the Housing Programs Director at Catholic Charities Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has some concerns about this bill which would increase the minimum age from 55 to 62 years of age for elderly housing.

It is our understanding that the current definition of elderly housing is based on federal legislation which provides that an elderly project could chose either an minimum age criteria of 55 or 62 years of age. The Housing Assistance Program at Catholic Charities Hawai'i works with many projects to assist our elderly to gain access. We found that many affordable projects that utilize Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) **require ALL residents (including spouses) to meet the minimum age criteria**. This was reported to be due to the requirements of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program. This program is the major funder for many new elderly rental projects.

A minimum age requirement of 62 may again impact on elderly couples who want to enter these projects. We are unsure if the bill as written would result in projects again screening out couples with a younger spouse. We suggest that clarification is needed on any negative impacts for elders, especially re: access to LIHTC buildings, before this bill moves forward.

The other advantage that we found with the minimum age criteria of 55 years, is that this addresses the needs of "young" elders who may have lost jobs or have reduced hours and who wish the security and environment of senior housing. The Housing Assistance Program assists elders aged 60 or older, and finds that clients who are 60 or 61 have very few housing options. Many projects already mandate a minimum age of 62, and so younger seniors may remain homeless or at risk for homelessness since they cannot even apply to the long waitlists for housing until after their 62nd birthday.

At this time, it appears that the definition which allows projects to choose 55 as the minimum age opens up more options for our seniors. Before moving forward, we urge the legislature to clarify the impacts of this bill. Thank you for hearing our concerns.

