

From : Curtis J. Kropar, Executive Director - Hawaiian Hope
Date : March 9th, 2010
Re : HR 62 and HCR 114 - Homeless Safe Zones.

Summary : This letter represent our full support and desire to establish "Homeless Safe Zones."

Hawaiian Hope is a technology based non profit organization with the objectives to address the parallel issues of homeless services and disaster management. Hawaiian Hope designs web based data management software to assist organizations to manage their facilities and day-to-day operations. We currently manage the data of SOME of the states largest homeless shelters and the personal data of over 5,800 homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

Fact : There are more homeless than there is shelter capacity. Period.

I have heard over and over "those homeless don't want to follow the rules and that is why they don't go to the shelters."

Quite bluntly, i am tired of hearing the same errorred statement over and over when i know for a fact that there is not enough capacity for the shelters to handle the entire population of homeless here on this island. While we have made significant progress over the past 3 years in opening shelters and getting people under a roof, when addressing the problem as a whole, the argument of "go to a shelter" is, for the most part, moot as there are not enough shelter beds for all of the homeless. Are ALL shelters at 100% capacity ? no. But having room for 25 when there are 200 in the area, leaves the option irrelevant for 150 people.

Fact : Hostility does not help to solve the problems people have.

I am tired of hearing the city and state creating hostile laws and rules that tell homeless where they can NOT go. Cant sleep in the park, cant sleep on the beaches, cant sleep in your car, cant sleep on benches.... and the most recent attempt to make being homeless illegal... cant sleep on the sidewalk.

We need to stop creating laws that penalize and tell people where they can not go and start assisting and telling people where it is SAFE to go. Its the RIGHT thing to do.

"Safe Zones" will help to address several issues :

- 1) People need a decent nights sleep. Official safe zones will allow people to sleep without purposely being rousted.
- 2) Aid social workers in the ability to find their client. when a sweep occurs, people are scattered and it makes helping them exponentially more difficult. Safe zones will allow for case managers to know where their clients are.
- 3) sanitation. Establishing official locations for the homeless will aid in setting up sanitation.
- 4) stability. Fact. People are more productive when they are stabilized. Knowing that your stuff is safe, your kids can sleep safely, and you are not going to get fines because you are poor, lends a lot to people re-establishing their stability. They can concentrate on progress and not spend time concentrating on dodging fines.
- 5) Address public concern and the beliefs that the very visible homeless populations in tourist areas are having a negative impact to tourism.
- 6) allows us to start working more closely addressing the core issues and not just dealing with the "symptoms" of being homeless.

We urge your immediate endorsement of this subject to create real progress in solving the problem of homelessness.

Housing Committee

Date : March 9th, 2010

Re : HR 62 and HCR 114 - Homeless Safe Zones

LATE TESTIMONY

Support of HCR 114 and HR 62

Good Morning, Chair Cabanilla, Vice-Chair Chong and Members of the Housing Committee,

This testimony is provided on behalf of the **Waikiki Neighborhood Board**, which last night voted 15 to 1 in support of HCR 114 and HR 62 to lead to the establishment of Safe Zones for homeless individuals. (The 1 who voted "with reservations" was concerned that Safe Zones could become "too popular.")

The Waikiki Neighborhood Board members are:

Jo-Ann Adams, Les A. Among, Helen Carroll, Raymond A. Gruntz, Jim Poole, Mary Simpson, Jeff Apaka, Louis Erteschik, Esq. (Vice Chair), Robert J. Finley (Chair), Walt Flood, Richard S. Personius, Charles K. Torigoe, Francine Dudoit-Tagupa, Jeffrey D. Merz, Michael Peters (Secretary-Treasurer), Chris Rector, and Mark Smith.

Homelessness has been a long-term problem, especially in the Waikiki area. State and City efforts to regulate homelessness away from our parks, beaches, and sidewalks— and into homeless shelters— were not successful. This compassionate, proactive effort to designate an area where they *may* stay overnight in a reasonably safe and supervised setting represents a short-term solution while we work together to find long-term solutions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit comments in support of HCR 114 and HR 62.

Representative Tom Brower

D-23: Waikiki, Ala Moana, Kakaako

LATE TESTIMONY

March 9, 2010

The Honorable Rida Cabanilla
Committee on Housing
415 South Beretania Street

Re: Support for Homeless Safe Zone (HR62 – Homeless Safe Zones)

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Liz Vaughan and I am an MSW student at the Myron B Thompson School of Social Work at the University of Hawaii at the Manoa campus. I am here today to request that you support HR 62. I am originally from Portland, Oregon and moved to Honolulu to attend the University of Hawaii in August of 2009. When I arrived, one of the first things that I noticed and that has stayed with me as I have settled into my new city was the number of homeless individuals sleeping in various locations throughout the city. As I have begun working in the community through my practicum at Life Foundation, I have learned of the limited resources available for many of these homeless individuals. Just this last week, I learned that there are only two main shelters where I could refer a new client and that one of them is no longer accepting new individuals. This provides challenges both for the clients as well as the agencies attempting to assist them.

Providing a safe place for homeless individuals to congregate, converse and build community as well as a safe place to sleep is essential to the homeless population. In Portland, we have a group of homeless individuals who have worked with the city of Portland to build an unusual community. This group known as dignity village is temporarily living on land that the city re-zoned as a “campground” and has allowed for them to set up temporary shelters on the city’s land. The group has been living on this property since 2001 and they have created their own bylaws and elect board members from the community for yearlong terms. This model has been very beneficial for these individuals and may provide a safe housing alternative for the homeless residents of Honolulu.

Here is what Dignity Village says about why they needed a campground or safe zone in Portland. I believe that many of these reasons are also valid in the city of Honolulu and for the homeless population who live here.

“A campground would provide a safe haven to homeless people. Somewhere they can sleep without interfering in the operation of business downtown. Somewhere they can be safe from the drug dealers and crime scene rather than being confused with this criminal crowd. Somewhere they can use a sanitary restroom or get clean to look for housing and employment. Somewhere they can receive mail and phone messages from landlords and employers. Somewhere they can hook-up with service providers, outreach workers, and medical assistance. Somewhere they can store their belongings, prepare healthy meals, network with others looking for work and housing. A campground would solve a host of problems from relieving health issues, providing safety and resources, to giving service providers a good central location to hook-up with those most in need of their services.” (Retrieved from www.dignityvillage.org on March 9, 2010)

I ask that you please support this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HR 62.

Sincerely,

Liz Vaughan

March 9, 2010

The Honorable Rida Cabanilla
Committee on Housing
415 South Beretania Street

LATE TESTIMONY

Re: Support for Homeless Safe Zone (HR62 – Homeless Safe Zones)

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Shanna Frye and I am a Masters of Social Work student at the University of Hawaii. While we are in dire need for long-term solutions to combat homelessness here in Hawaii, there are immediate problems that need to be addressed. The homeless do not have any designated areas where they can sleep at night with the comfort of knowing they will not be forced to relocate at a moment's notice. They are most vulnerable at night and often victims of crime. This bill will help to alleviate the burden they carry of not having a place to return to at night. It will also help to give the homeless a sense of home and community. Not only will it give the homeless a sense of security, but the residents and tourists as well.

Hawaii relies heavily on the tourism industry. Here on Oahu, the majority of the tourists stay in Waikiki, where many of the homeless reside. Unfortunately this has great impact on whether or not these tourists will return to the island. The beauty of the islands is what attracts most people. Unfortunately with the overwhelming presence of homeless in these public areas, it takes away from the state's appeal. If Hawaii no longer appeals to tourists and they do not feel safe, there is great concern for the future of our tourism industry.

Homeless safe zones will provide an immediate solution to these problems and there are private organizations already willing to provide this service. I ask that you please support this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HR 62.

Sincerely,

Shanna Frye