

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

From: Beth Palanza, MSW student, University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Date: March 25, 2010

Subject: Support of SB2473 HD1, Relating to housing

**LATE TESTIMONY**

Good afternoon Committee, my name is Beth Palanza and I am here today to support SB2473. This bill would allow grandchildren of elderly housing project residents to temporarily reside with the residents in certain family crisis situations. It also affords residents evicted for raising grandchildren-in-crisis in their housing project units, priority status to return to project housing. I strongly support this bill because I am a social work student, and I believe that this measure would protect children already at risk, shield the elderly from unjust eviction, and strengthen the Ohana.

Studies have shown that children in crisis situations respond with more resiliency when placed with a caregiver that they know and trust. It is imperative that these high risk situations are handled carefully because these children are the future of our state. Letting these children stay with their own family during a time of crisis helps this "at risk" child, become a child "at promise". In other words, providing keiki with the most stable and familiar environment gives them hope for success, instead of at risk for failure.

Furthermore, people should not have to choose between Ohana and shelter. Grandparents are already making a sacrifice by taking in their children's children, yet how is current policy treating these people? What kind of message is being sent to grandparents? That it is unacceptable to nurture their family, even in a time of crisis? It is this current policy that is unacceptable. Evicting the elderly for trying to help their own is detrimental to the Ohana, and further exacerbates the crisis at hand. Also, the current policy increases the cost of time, energy, and workforce to respond to the situation.

Passing Senate Bill 2473 would protect children already at risk, shield the elderly from unjust eviction, and strengthen the Ohana. At this time I would like to extend a special thanks to the Kokua Council and other advocates such as Senator Oakland for speaking up for Grandparents and their families. I would also like to thank the committee for considering my testimony. Mahalo.