



PARTNERS IN CARE
Oahu's Coalition of Homeless Providers

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 910: RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF HOMELESS PROGRAMS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair, and Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair,
And Members of the Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Pamela Menter, Chair, Partners in Care

HEARING: Tuesday, February 2, 2010, 2:00 pm; CR 325

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Partners in Care in strong support of SB 910, which would move the homeless programs and services within the Department of Human Services by transferring the state Homeless Programs from the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) to the Benefit, Employment and Support Services (BESS) Division at the Dept. of Human Services (DHS). I am Pamela Menter, Chair of Partners in Care, a membership organization of providers of homeless services, concerned professionals, units of local and state government, consumers, and other community representatives and stakeholders located in the City and County of Honolulu.

The proposed transfer of the Homeless Programs from HPHA to the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division of DHS would provide a distinct advantage because it would provide more streamlining and efficiency in procurement and contracting. We feel that placing Homeless Programs directly under the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division makes a great deal of sense, in that BESS already has the infrastructure to support more efficient and timely contracting, and will be able to provide other support as needed. BESS is also a very appropriate fit for the Homeless Programs because it deals with similar funding sources and clients. Furthermore, the transfer would improve the ability of DHS to coordinate services and avoid their duplication.

We urge you to support SB 910 which would provide the most appropriate transfer for the Homeless Programs to make the most effective use of funding, ensure that their services can be enhanced, and improve program outcomes.



LATE TESTIMONY

Email to: JUDTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Hearing on: February 2, 2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 325

DATE: February 2, 2010

TO: House Committee on Judiciary
Representative Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair
Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair

FROM: Dennis Arakaki, Executive Director

RE: **SUPPORT FOR SB 910 SD1 HD1: Relating to the Transfer of Homeless Programs Within the Department of Human Services**

Honorable Chairs and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, I am Dennis Arakaki, representing both the Hawaii Family Forum and the Hawaii Catholic Conference.

Hawaii Family Forum is a non-profit, pro-family education organization committed to preserving and strengthening families in Hawaii, representing a network of over 250 Christian churches. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in Hawaii, under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, which represents over 220,000 Catholics in Hawaii.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 910, which would transfer the Homeless Programs from the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) to the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division within the Department of Human Services.

As a former chair of the Housing committee when it was once part of The Human Services Committee and the Hawaiian Affairs Committee, I have seen and have been part of the Homeless programs moving from different jurisdictions. It seems ironic and almost tragic that the Homeless Program always seemed to be without a home. Where they were placed it seems, was dependent and an indication of their priority status within the department of human services and even within the Public Housing Authority and HFDC.

We support the proposed move of the Homeless Programs from HPHA to the Benefit, Employment, and Support Services Division (BESS) of DHS. This transfer would provide more streamlining and efficiency in procurement and contracting. We feel that placing Homeless Programs directly under BESS would be the best fit since BESS already has the infrastructure to support more efficient and timely contracting and will be able to provide other support as needed. Furthermore, BESS is an appropriate fit for the homeless programs since they deal with similar funding sources and clients. The transfer would further improve the ability of DHS to coordinate services and avoid duplication.

Wherever it is housed, it will be important that they be given a greater priority within the Department of Human Services, something that cannot be legislated but certainly emphasizes as the intent of SB 910. We urge you to support SB 910 which would provide the most appropriate transfer for the Homeless Programs to make the most effective use of funding, ensure that their services can be enhanced, and improve program outcomes. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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