

SCR 120

Testimony

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Comments of
Denise M. Wise
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
To the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

April 7, 2010 1:15 P.M.
Room 211, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SCR 120, S.D. 1
**EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY'S PLAN TO
IMPLEMENT THE TENANT MONITOR PROGRAM**

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the intent of SCR 120, SD1, to assist HPHA in the establishment of a Resident Monitor Program in public housing. HPHA would like to suggest some changes in the wording of the Concurrent Resolution to avoid confusion as to the status of the residents who will be selected to be Tenant Monitors.

SD1 uses the term "resident managers" in referring to the Tenant Monitors. We would like the term eliminated so as not to create the impression that they will have managerial duties or authority beyond what is envisioned in the program. SCR 120, SD 1 correctly describes the reason for the program and the responsibilities of the residents who participate. However, the the term "resident manager" would more appropriately describe an employee of HPHA or a contracted management company, not a Tenant Monitor.

We ask that you amend SCR 120 SD1 as below. Thank you for your concern for the residents and the success of this program.

WHEREAS, when disturbances occur at public housing projects and police officers are called to the premises, there is often no single person with the proper authority and responsibility to file complaints with the police officers or to handle the situation, especially when the property managers' offices are closed during nights and weekends; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority has developed a plan to implement the Tenant Monitor Program as a pilot program in three housing projects; and

WHEREAS, under the proposed Tenant Monitor Program, qualified residents will be designated as points of contact who are immediately available for emergency situations when property management is unavailable and who may authorize police or other emergency responders to enter the property, direct police or other emergency responders to appropriate units or sections of the housing projects, and confirm whether individuals do or do not reside on the property; and

WHEREAS, under the proposed Tenant Monitor Program, the designated residents will not be employees of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority but will receive community police training from the Honolulu Police Department and other safety awareness training from the Department of the Attorney General; and

WHEREAS, as part of the proposed Tenant Monitor Program, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority plans to provide free rent to individuals who are designated as tenant monitors; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority is awaiting approval from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development on the Authority's Tenant Monitor Program plan to provide free rent to the designated resident managers and expects approval of the plan by July 1, 2010; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, the House of Representatives concurring, that the Legislature support the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's plan to implement the Tenant Monitor Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii Public Housing Authority is encouraged to provide an option of either free rent or partial rental assistance, in lieu of compensation, to a designated resident under the proposed Tenant Monitor Program so that:

(1) The value of the rental assistance is commensurate with the tenant monitor's duties, which may differ from the duties of another resident monitor in the program depending on factors such as the size of the housing project for which a tenant monitor is responsible; and

(2) The Hawaii Public Housing Authority may designate more than one tenant monitor per housing project to ensure adequate or improved coverage throughout the day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii Public Housing Authority is requested to report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2011. The report shall address the following:

(1) Whether or not the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development has approved the proposed Tenant Monitor Program;

(2) If the Tenant Monitor Program is not approved, the reasons for the disapproval; and

(3) If the Tenant Monitor Program is approved, an update on the status of implementation of the Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a certified copy of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Executive Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority.