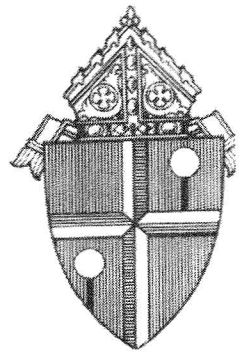


ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII



St. Stephen's Diocesan Center of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu
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Testimony of Kent Anderson
February 16, 2011, 10:30am; Conference Room 325
Support for HB 1450

Good Morning Committee Chairs Cabanilla and Rhoads, and members of the Committee on Housing and Committee on Labor & Public Employment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of **HB 1450.**

My name is Kent Anderson, and I am here on behalf of the Diocese of Honolulu. I serve as the newly appointed Housing Development Director for the Office of Affordable Housing for the Diocese. We are your partners and among your strongest supporters in providing supportive services and permanent housing opportunities for those at the lowest levels of income who are either homeless or dangerously close to becoming homeless. We have and will continue to be your partners because we know that the government cannot and should not be the sole caretaker for our whole community.

Homelessness will impact over 15,000 of our neighbors this year statewide. Many of the victims will be keiki and kupuna. Many working families are unable to make ends meet since we experience the highest housing costs in the country. According to HUD statistics, fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,610. In order to afford this level of rent without paying more than 30% of income on housing, an employee must earn \$30.96/hr. Unfortunately, the average renter only earns \$12.89/hr in Hawaii. At this wage, two full time jobs are not sufficient to sustainably support a family. For minimum wage earners, the outlook is heartbreaking. A minimum wage earner would need to work 171 hours/week to support a family of four without any time off for sickness or vacation. An individual who could achieve this workload would be miraculous, especially since there are only 168 hours in a week.

We understand that times are tough right now; therefore, we must step forward to assist those most in need. Affordable housing is a basic need for our entire Ohana. It helps provide the basis of a healthy workforce, healthy children, healthy kupuna, and healthy economy. We ask that you prioritize your legislation to ensure that homeless services and affordable housing are priorities during this legislative session. We appreciate and highly applaud your past efforts and look forward to partnering with you to provide a home for each member of our Ohana.

HB1450 will make a positive impact in reducing homelessness. Employment assistance is consistently listed as one of the top needs of homeless individuals and families. The proposed program will provide the tools and experience to help homeless individuals help themselves. We are particularly excited about the housing component that provides needed stability to ensure that assisted individuals continue to be successful long after they leave the program. Please support HB1450 and help us create a stronger community. We urge your support for this bill.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. Please contact me at kentanderson@rcchawaii.org or by phone at 808-203-6718 if we may be of assistance.