

February 12, 2011

TO: The Honorable Rep. Rida T.R. Cabanilla, Chair

Committee on Housing

FROM: Amy Hart

SUBJECT: H.B. 70 RELATING TO THE HOMELESS

Hearing: Wednesday, February 16, 2011; 8:30 am.

Conference Room 325, State Capitol

PURPOSE: Return-to-home program for voluntary, homeless participants

POSITION:

I am writing in support of H.B. 70 as written with an emphasis on appropriate identification of a support system prior to sending the individual to another state and subsequent follow up. As the committee is well aware, Hawaii has one of the highest homeless populations in the country. Sadly, many of our homeless are full time employees. The cost of living on these islands is more than a lot of people can afford and many find themselves homeless that had not intended as a result of this.

Additionally, programs across the country allow other states to send homeless individuals here to Hawaii. It has been documented that other states will provide chronically homeless individuals with tickets to somewhere else. In passing this bill, Hawaii is proposing to reunite individuals with a support system to help them versus just passing the problem along. This should not be used simply as a measure to reduce Hawaii's homeless population but as the bill is written would work to serve each individual consumer with re-establishing support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.