

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

February 1, 2012 8:45 A.M.
Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
House Bill 1796
Relating to Public Housing

Honorable Chair and Members of the House Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding House Bill 1796, relating to public housing.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the intent of this measure, which would add a new section to Chapter 356D requiring the authority to adopt rules implementing a five-year time limit for tenancy in any state public housing units. The HPHA Board of Directors has recently stated its agreement with such a policy, that public housing shall not be permanent or generational, but should to the greatest extent be transitional and temporary. However, the HPHA must respectfully oppose enactment of the measure since it would have a negative impact on the elderly and disabled state public housing tenants who presently represents about 67% of the total 864 state public housing units administered by the HPHA, and would be more appropriately handled by the HPHA via existing administrative protocols.

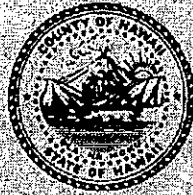
The HPHA feels that this measure would have unintended consequences increasing homelessness within the elderly and disabled population groups. These population groups tend to live on fixed incomes, such as Social Security or Social Security Insurance payments, and have few opportunities to improve earning capacity. This measure does not differentiate between the state elderly/disabled public housing projects and the state family projects. In particular for the elderly, such a policy would prevent tenants from having the opportunity to age in place.

Further, as stated *supra*, the HPHA Board of Directors is fully in support of limiting tenancy in state family housing projects. Our agency staff is currently in the process of

evaluating 15-193, Hawaii Administrative Rules, to make the necessary amendments to realize the Legislature's intent for the state public housing projects. The HPHA envisions the state public housing as a type of gap housing within the continuum of housing for veterans and income groups above 30 percent Area Median Income on their way toward market rate housing. The HPHA would appreciate having the opportunity to develop time limits on state public housing through an agency developed methodology that would allow us to incorporate participation from property management staff, public hearings, and the tenants that would be directly impacted by this measure

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the House Committee on Housing with the agency's position regarding H.B. 1796. We respectfully request the Committee to hold this measure, and we thank you very much for your dedicated support.

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



Stephen J. Arnett
Housing Administrator

Niniau K. Simmons
Assistant Housing
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January 30, 2012

The Honorable Rida R.T. Cabanilla, Chair
The Honorable Ken Ito, Vice Chair
and Committee Members
Committee on Housing

Twenty-Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2012

SUBJECT: House Bill 1796
Hearing Date: 02/01/2012
Time: 8:45 AM
Conference Room: 325

The Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD) **opposes** House Bill 1796.

According to Hawai'i Housing Plan Study 2011, seniors make up 28% of the 6,404 units maintained by Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA). Of those 1,771 elderly units, about two-thirds or 1,180 units are for low-income seniors with fixed incomes. HB 1796 will result in many of Hawai'i's elderly becoming homeless, which we are certain is not the Legislature's intention.

Also according Hawai'i Housing Plan Study 2011, persons with disabilities make up 19% of the 6,404 units maintained by HPHA or 1,217 units. Persons with disabilities require special housing considerations not only to accommodate physical limitations, but also as a result of their financial challenges as they are more likely to have income below the poverty line. HB 1796 will result in many of Hawai'i's residents with disabilities becoming homeless.

In addition, the high cost of living in Hawai'i and the limited number of low cost rentals and rental subsidies makes it particularly challenging to procure safe and decent housing for our most vulnerable populations—our seniors and disabled.




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The OHCD believes House Bill 1796 will significantly increase homelessness and have a significant negative impact on our seniors and people with disabilities.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the negative impacts of this bill.



Stephen J. Arnett
Housing Administrator