

TESTIMONY OF CYNTHIA REZENTES
IN **STRONG SUPPORT** TO H.B. 430
February 9, 2011

To: Chair Rida Cabanilla and members of the Committee on Housing

My name is Cynthia Rezentes and I am a resident of the Wai`anae Coast. In addition, while not speaking for the Nanakuli-Maili Neighborhood Board, I have been the Housing Committee Chair for over two years and deal with all issues relating to housing within the community, including issues dealing with the homeless. In that capacity, I am a member of the Leeward Housing Coalition which submitted a report to the Legislature this year in response to SCR 206 SD1 and HCR 262 HD1.

I **strongly support** the intent of this bill to replace the funding that was removed from the Homeless Programs office within the Department of Human Services during the last administration. The number of homeless within the State is still significant and requires more support and not less to make sure that all service providers and shelter providers are submitting the best practices possible to help reduce and eventually eliminate the State's homeless problems.

This can only be done if adequate funding is provided to the office responsible to manage all State homeless programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of this bill.

Cynthia K.L. Rezentes
Wai`anae resident



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 430: MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAMS OFFICE

TO: Representative Rida T. R. Cabanilla, Chair, Representative Pono Chong, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Housing

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Wednesday, 2/9/11; 8:30 am; Conference Room 325

Chair Cabanilla, Vice Chair Chong, and Members of the Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 430, which makes an appropriation to restore positions for the Homeless Programs Office under the Department of Human Services/BESSD. Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly supports this bill.

The Homeless Programs Office administers both State and federal funding for homeless programs across the State of Hawaii. Their critical functions are being impacted by the severe cut in funding which reduced their staff positions from 9 persons to 3 positions, currently. Catholic Charities Hawaii works with this Office on many contracts and homeless initiatives. The staff are dedicated and hardworking, but the severe lack of staff has impacted on their ability to effectively and efficiently administer the many contracts under this Office. Providers have experienced delays in contract implementation, payments, etc. The Office needs to be adequately staffed to provide services.

Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly urges the Legislature to support this bill and appropriate adequate funds to restore positions to the Homeless Programs Office.

Thank you for hearing this bill and for your support.





HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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Email to: HSGTestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

Hearing on: February 9, 2011 @ 8:30 a.m.

Conference Room # 325

DATE: February 7, 2011

TO: House Committee on Housing
Representative Rida Cabanilla, Chair
Representative Pono Chong, Vice Chair

FROM: Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director

RE: Support for HB 430 | MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAMS OFFICE

Honorable Chairs and members of the House Committee on Housing, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents over 200,000 Catholics in Hawaii,

We support this bill because of the critical role of the Homeless Programs Office. The Homeless Programs Office administers both State and federal funding for homeless programs across the State of Hawaii. The important function of their office is being impacted by the severe cut in funding which has forced a reduction of staff positions from 9 persons to 3 positions. These staff members are dedicated and hardworking, but their ability to effectively and efficiently administer the many contracts under this Office has been affected by the worsening economy. Our understanding is that providers have experienced delays in contract implementation, payments, etc. That means that this important office needs to be adequately staffed to provide services.

The Hawaii Catholic Conference is committed to reducing poverty now and for the future. The provision of safe and affordable housing is an important part of any such effort. Often support services are necessary to enable an individual to make the transition from homelessness to a stable housing situation possible. Having said that, we acknowledge and recognize that the fiscal situation in our State and country is serious and that cuts in the budget are being made in light of these challenging facts.

The teaching of the church is clear on this issue: "...there is a growing awareness of the exalted dignity proper to the human person, since he stands above all things, and his rights and duties are universal and inviolable. Therefore, there must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom even in matters religious." Gaudium Et Spes (5):

Based on our commitment to the dignity of the human person and to helping the least among us, we strongly support these measures. These bills, if passed, will move us in the right direction to end homelessness in Hawaii. Along with our community partners, Catholic Charities Hawaii and the Diocesan Office for Affordable Housing, we strongly urge your support. We leave the technicalities of the bills to their expertise.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Rida T.R. Cabanilla, Chair
House Committee on Housing

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Interim Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 430 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE HOMELESS
PROGRAMS OFFICE**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 9, 2011; 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of H.B. 430 is to restore funding for positions for the homeless programs office of the Department of Human Services.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of this bill but defer on the fiscal implications until the Executive Biennium Budget is finalized.

We respectfully offer two corrections to the information in this bill. First, there was a 70% cut to positions in the Homeless Programs Office, from a staff of ten to three. Second, millions were not cut from the operating budget.

With the loss of 70% of the positions, the Homeless Program Office is barely sustaining in an emergency mode function, although some functions have been successfully outsourced to avoid default with federal requirements which would trigger loss of federal funds.

The 2010 Legislature recognized the desperate circumstances facing the Homeless Program and restored and funded three additional positions in the FY 2011 budget, however, DHS was prevented from filling the three positions.

Additionally, the funding to sustain several shelter programs was not included in the budget submitted for FY 2012. This bill could address the lack of funding for those shelters (Ulu Ke Kukui and Seawinds in Waianae; and West Hawaii Emergency Shelter and Kaloko Transitional Shelter in Kona).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.