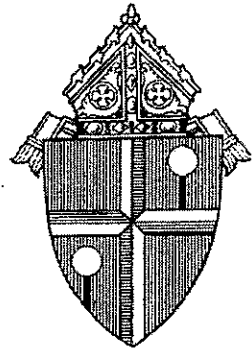


ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII

St. Stephen's Diocesan Center of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu
6301 Pali Highway, Kaneohe, HI 96744 • Phone: (808) 203-6718



Testimony of Kent Anderson
February 24, 2011, 1:30pm; Conference Room 308
Support for HB 70, HD1

Good Afternoon Committee Chair Marcus R.Oshiro, Vice-Chair Marilyn B Lee, and members of the Committee on Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 70.

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.

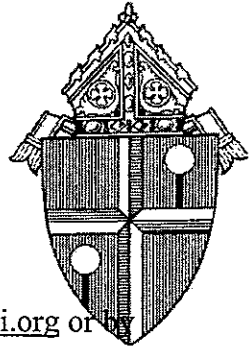
Homelessness will impact over 15,000 of our neighbors this year statewide. Many of the victims will be keiki and kupuna. Many working families are unable to make ends meet since we experience the highest housing costs in the country. According to HUD statistics, fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment 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.

HB70 will make a positive impact in reducing homelessness. Most homelessness in Hawaii consists of native born "locals" and long-time residents (over 60% have resided in Hawaii over 10 years); nevertheless, there is a smaller percentage of people who have recently come to our islands and were unable to afford Hawaii's high cost of living (~13% of homeless have resided in the state for less than a year). Some homeless families and individuals would greatly benefit by the return to their support networks and thereby return to housing stability. We believe this bill would help reunify families and reduce the high cost of homeless services to the State. Please note that we support this bill due to the provision that the support network is willing and able to take these individuals in and provide adequate housing, thereby eliminating their current struggle with homelessness. Please support HB70 and help us create a stronger community.

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

House Committee on Finance
February 24, 2011
Ilalo Parayno — Resident of Leeward
Testimony in **support**
HB 70

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Finance Committee,

I **support** HB70. The purpose of the return to home program is to assist homeless people from other states voluntarily return to home. This isn't meant to solve the entire homeless problem in the state of Hawaii, only the specific population that came to Hawaii, after viewing glamorized television shows such as Hawaii 5-0, and for the warmth and beauty of our islands and has then encountered the harsh reality of homelessness in Hawaii. It is meant for the out-of-state homeless who already have family, friends or other support services in the place where they are requesting transport to.

This program will work with homeless services, local airlines and charter companies to obtain tickets. It will get participants ready for travel and also follow up one month later. This will cost between \$400 and \$600 per person.

On the other hand it now costs the State of Hawaii between \$30,000 and \$35,000 per year, per homeless person in services, which include extensive hospital stays and medical care, shelter, food and social and other support services. This doesn't even include children incurring developmental delays with later costs.

This bill would save the state of Hawaii thousands of dollars and much un-necessary suffering. Please pass HB70.

Mahalo,

Ilalo Parayno
Leeward Hawaii

Rep. Rida Cabanilla

From: Kanani Souza [kananisouza@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 8:34 PM
To: Rep. Rida Cabanilla

I submit this testimony in support of HB70 to establish the return to home program to assist eligible homeless individuals to return to their home state and thus save the state millions of dollars (taxpayer costs).

Kanani Souza
Hawaii Resident