

From: Windward Ahupua`a Alliance [info@waa-hawaii.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 29, 2011 5:18 PM
To: WAM Testimony
Subject: HB 70 HD 2 SD1 - RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

L A T E

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Decision-Making

9:30 am

Wednesday, March 30, 2011

Conference Room 211

HB 70 HD 2 SD1 - RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Establishes the return-to-home program to assist eligible homeless individuals return to their home state if there is a support network available and the support network is able to receive them. Appropriates funds. Effective July 1 2030.

STRONGLY OPPOSE

The purpose of **HB 70 HD 2 SD1** looks good on paper, but as someone who has worked directly as a volunteer with hundreds of homeless and at-risk individuals since 1978, this bill does not begin to address homelessness in any meaningful way.

In fact, I co-founded the *Windward Homeless Coalition* - now the *Windward-North Shore Homeless Coalition* in 2002.

All it does is show Hawaii`i taxpayers that officials are "doing something" about homelessness in a visible way - seeming to reduce the numbers by moving these people along to another city or state to address the long-term problems each homeless person faces.

In fact, 80 percent of today's homeless have been in Hawaii`i for more than ten years - and if the number of people from Micronesia are eliminated from the remaining homeless, we are talking about maybe as many as 10%.

Furthermore, the costs to the taxpayers of Hawaii`i will be much, much more than the costs to buy a few hundred plane tickets each year.

Someone in the *Department of Human Services* will need to be assigned to track each applicant for these services not just before but also afterwards. Some of the applicants might need to be tracked and cleared by the *Attorney General* or a county prosecutor's office.

There will be additional costs within the *Department of Accounting and General Services* to track the costs of social services staff in addition to ticket purchases.

Why not work with local faith communities with connections across the **North American** continent - *Roman Catholics, Mormons, Episcopalians, Methodists, Jews* - to buy the tickets and to provide these services both here as well as in homeless person's hometown.

I urge that you either defer this bill or re-draft it to eliminate any costs to the *State of Hawai'i*. Meanwhile, I urge that you fund the various affordable/workforce housing and homeless services bills still alive - especially those which set up both Housing First programs.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Shannon Wood, *President*

Windward Ahupua`a Alliance

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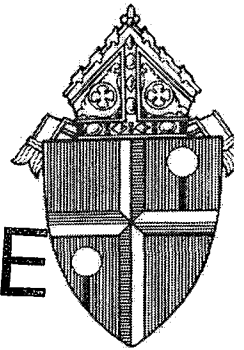
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ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII

St. Stephen's Diocesan Center of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Honolulu
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L A T E



Testimony of Kent Anderson
March 30, 2011, 9:30pm; Conference Room 211
Support Intent for HB 70, HD2, SD1

Good Morning Committee Chair David Y. Ige, Vice-Chair Michelle Kidani, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of **HB 70 HD2, SD1.**

My name is Kent Anderson, and I represent 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.

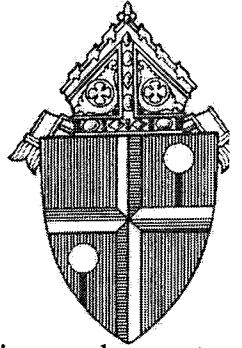
Homelessness will impact over 15,000 of our neighbors this year statewide. Many of the victims will be keiki and kupuna. Many working families are unable to make ends meet since we experience the highest housing costs in the country. According to HUD statistics, fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment 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, HD2, SD1 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, HD2, SD1 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.