

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



PATRICIA McMANAMAN
DIRECTOR
BARBARA A. YAMASHITA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

March 21, 2012

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

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **S.B. 2568 – RELATING TO THE HOMELESS**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 21, 2012; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of the proposed legislation is to require counties to provide information on and access to temporary emergency shelters to homeless individuals and families upon removing them from public property.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.

County and State actions to remove presumed homeless individuals from public property have historically been well-planned and executed with the full cooperation and collaboration of homeless service providers. Typically, the Counties have sought the help of homeless service providers to conduct initial outreach to the individuals impacted by park clean-ups or other similar closures. In addition to notifying the affected individuals about the planned closure or clean-up of the public property, outreach workers and County staff have provided them with information about the

housing and/or shelter resources available to them prior to and at the point of displacement. Many of the individuals who had been living on public property have chosen to utilize those shelter resources, while some others have not.

The Department works closely with the Counties and with their non-profit partners to ensure that outreach, emergency and transitional shelter services are available to those who need and choose to utilize them. The Homeless Programs Office does not have the staffing or capacity to identify locations state-wide to be used for temporary emergency shelters or to monitor the Counties' efforts to develop alternatives to already-established and funded shelter services for the homeless.

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

**OFFICE OF HOUSING
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 306 * HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-4687 * FAX: (808) 768-4242 * INTERNET: www.honolulu.gov



PETER B. CARLISLE
MAYOR

KEITH I. ISHIDA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TRISH K. MORIKAWA
COUNTY HOUSING COORDINATOR

March 20, 2012

The Honorable Rida T.R. Cabanilla, Chair, and Members
Committee on Housing
House of Representatives
Twenty Sixth Legislature
Regular Session of 2012
State of Hawaii

RE Testimony In Opposition to S.B. 2568, Relating to Emergency Shelters

Senate Bill 2568 requires a county that is relocating a homeless person or family from public property to provide information on, and access to, a temporary emergency shelter. The City and County of Honolulu stands in opposition to this Bill.

As a matter of policy, the City and County of Honolulu does not displace or relocate any families or individuals, homeless or otherwise, who are lawfully using or occupying public property. As presently drafted, S.B. 2568 does not adequately define what actions constitute a relocation of a homeless person that would require the offering of information and access to emergency shelter. As such, the enforcement of existing ordinances such as park closure rules, or the temporary closure of public property for routine maintenance could trigger the emergency shelter provisions of this Bill if a homeless family or individual is asked to vacate public property when a park is closed or to accommodate maintenance activities. We further note that the requirements of S.B. 2568 should apply to State agencies displacing homeless persons as well as County agencies..

While recognizing the intentions of the Bill, we suggest that this Bill is unnecessary and as presently drafted would create an unnecessary burden on County governments while omitting State agencies from the same requirements and we respectfully request that it be held.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith I. Ishida".

Keith I. Ishida
Executive Director

March 20th, 2012

To: Representative Rida Cabanialla, Chair
Representative Ken Ito, Vice Chair
Members of the House of Representatives Committee on Housing

From: Cerissa Payment Rhodes

Subject: Support of SB2568 requiring that information on and access to temporary emergency shelters be provided to homeless individuals and their families when removing them from public property.

I am writing in support of SB2568 and am requesting that you vote in support of this important bill. Homelessness is a national concern and one that is very visible here in the Islands. According to the State of Hawaii Department of Human Service 15, 604 individuals were homeless with more than half of those being unsheltered. This number was up from 2009 and the numbers continue to grow.

However, there are a number of homeless shelters and programs across the state, but more than half of the homeless are not accessing them. There are most likely multiple reasons why these shelters are not being accessed, but for many it could simply be a lack of knowledge of the shelters. Providing information on these temporary emergency shelters is the first step to getting many of the homeless off the streets and into programs that can assist them in finding more permanent housing.

Please vote to pass SB2568 in support of providing homeless individuals information on these emergency shelters and programs. Together we can change the statistics. Mahalo.