



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY (with Amendment) IN SUPPORT OF SB 901: Relating to Housing

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Malama Solomon, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Water, Land, and Housing

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

Hearing: Thursday, 2/3/11; 1:15 p.m.; CR 225

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Solomon, and Members of the Committee on Water, Land, and Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 901, which would provide funding for a landlord liaison project. Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly supports this bill with one amendment:

Suggested Amendment-Section 2. lines 9-10: The sums appropriated shall be expended by the Department of Human Services/Homeless Programs Office (HPO). This is suggested since a landlord liaison project could build upon the Housing Placement Programs which are already being funded by the Homeless Programs Office, utilizing TANF funds. HPO has also administered federal ARRA funds for the Homeless Prevention Rapid-rehousing Program (HPRP). Approximately \$6 Million dollars has been received for this State-wide program over the past 2 years. However, these federal funds end 8/31/11 and no further funding is expected. The great reduction in funding to prevent homelessness can further acerbate homelessness in Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii has been operating the Housing Placement Program for 6 years. In FY 10, 240 families were assisted to prevent homelessness. A major component in the ongoing success of this program has been the relationships developed with landlords. Catholic Charities Hawaii now works with many landlords who will take a risk on one of our clients, knowing that case management and other services can be provided to assist the families to successfully remain in housing. Landlord liaison is key to linking people to permanent housing. In the first year of its HPRP funding, Catholic Charities Hawaii implemented the program and prevented homelessness for 308 persons in 116 households. These programs are highly successful.

Unfortunately, before the federal funds for HPRP, many people could not be assisted since they did not have children or meet the income eligibility for TANF. With funding for a landlord liaison project, others facing homelessness could also be assisted. **We urge your support for \$2 million dollars per year for landlord liaison services to prevent homelessness.** By reducing the flow of people falling into homelessness, other services can then assist the homeless to transition back to permanent housing.

