

SB 912



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

COMMENTS (with Amendments) for SB 912 SD1: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Senator David Ige, Chair, Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means

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

Hearing: Friday, 2/25/11; 9:00 a.m.; CR 211

Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 912, SD1, which would provide funding for housing placement services to prevent homelessness. I am Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison for housing and homeless issues at Catholic Charities Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly supports this bill. We suggest the following amendments:

Suggested Amendments: (also see pdf of suggested SB 912, SD2, sent along with this testimony:

1. Merge SB 904, SD1 (also being heard today) into this bill (SB 912).
2. Merge SB 905: relating to Housing, into this bill
3. Create SD2 which would coordinate funding for Prevention (SB 912), a project site for Housing First to address chronic homeless people (SB 904) and funding for the creation of affordable rental housing and repairs to public housing (SB 905) to address solutions to Hawaii's housing and homeless crises
4. In SD2: we also urge that **\$20 million be allocated to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation and designated to the Rental Housing Trust Fund.** We also support adequate funding to HPHA for repairs to public housing.

Merging these bills would create an overall plan to address both prevention of homelessness and solutions to the very tough issue of the chronic homeless. Creation of affordable rental housing must also be a key element to provide long-term solutions.

Catholic Charities Hawaii has been operating a very successful 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 expanded these services with the federal ARRA funds which enabled us to assist non-TANF families (including singles, elders, and families with no minor children). By reducing the flow of people falling into homelessness, other services can then assist the homeless to transition back to permanent housing.

Thank you for supporting solutions to the many facets of homelessness.



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February 24, 2011

The Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol, Room 211
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: S.B. 912, S.D. 1, Relating to Housing

DECISION MAKING: Friday, February 25, 2011, at 9:00 a.m.

Aloha Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani and Members of the Committee:

I am Myoung Oh, Government Affairs Director, submitting comments on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate and its 8,500 members. HAR **supports** S.B. 912, S.D. 1 which appropriates funds for the housing placement program within the Homeless Programs Office of the Department of Human Services.

There are approximately 6,000 homeless living in Hawai'i, and it is of serious concern to many communities and residents throughout this State. Furthermore, the high cost of housing and living, here in the islands, may make it difficult for struggling families trying to make ends meet, and to be able to afford the opportunity to own, or even rent a home.

HAR has historically supported mechanisms to help increase the supply of low and moderate income affordable rental housing, such as the Rental Housing Trust Fund program, which helps provide these opportunities.

We believe that the housing placement program may help to facilitate a balanced approach between homeless clients and landlords, through the creation of incentives for landlords to consider relaxing their screening criteria.

Lastly, this measure helps to increase the availability of rental housing for persons who face obstacles in moving from homelessness to permanent housing, and persons with lower incomes who need to find affordable rental housing. As such, HAR believes that the housing placement program is a creative solution that may help to address the homeless issue in our State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit comments.





PARTNERS IN CARE
Oahu's Coalition of Homeless Providers

<http://www.partnersincarehawaii.org/>

COMMENTS IN SUPPORT OF SB 912: ESTABLISHING THE HAWAII INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senator David Ige, Chair, Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Ways And Means

FROM: Max Gray, Chair, Partners In Care Advocacy Committee

Hearing: **FRIDAY, 2/25/11; 9:00 AM; Room 211**

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Ways And Means Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on SB 912 which appropriates funds for the housing placement program within the homeless programs office of the Department of Human Services. Partners In Care strongly supports this bill, with some important amendments.

Housing Placement is an important component of the continuum of homeless services. To expedite legislation related to housing, we propose incorporating **SB904**, which requires DHS to identify suitable properties for a Housing First program, and **SB905**, which makes appropriations to improve the existing public and affordable housing stock and increase public and affordable housing units, into SB912.

In addition, we urge you to insert language making a one-time appropriation of \$20 million to the Hawaii Housing and Finance Development Corporation, to be allocated to the Rental Housing Trust Fund. The RHTF has a proven track record of utilizing all its funding to produce housing. Since its inception, **4,094 affordable housing units** have been created. Most importantly, the RHTF is critical to leverage federal funds to make affordable housing projects pencil out. In the current economic crisis, affordable rentals are in even greater demand as workers lose jobs, have hours reduced, or face foreclosures.

Partners In Care, as a consortium of service providers from across O'ahu, advocates on behalf of a diverse population of homeless men, woman and children. Our clients' success relies on their ability to locate adequate and affordable housing. By combining the above bills, we take action towards preventing homelessness and providing services to the chronically homeless. Partners In Care urges the Legislature to consider the above suggestions along with our firm endorsement of SB912.

Thank you for your time and your support.