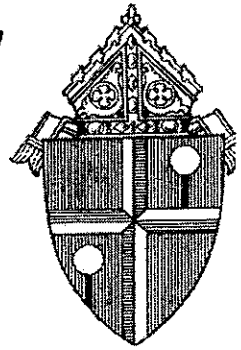


LATE TESTIMONY

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
March 16, 2011, 9:30am; Conference Room 325
Support for SB 912, SD2

Good Morning Committee Chair Cabanilla, Committee Chair Chang, and Members of the Committees on Housing and Water, Land & Ocean Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of **SB 912, SD2.**

My name is Kent Anderson, and I testify 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.

SB912, SD2 will make a positive impact in reducing homelessness. HOPE Services, Inc. has been operating a very successful landlord liaison project for several years on the Big Island called Tenant Solutions. To date they have helped secure dozens of landlords who have added over 500 affordable rentals to the Big Island's affordable housing inventory. Hundreds of landlords statewide will be willing to dedicate their properties to low-income tenants with proper guidance and support specific to their needs. By increasing our affordable housing stock and reducing the flow of people falling into homelessness, other services can more efficiently assist the homeless to transition back to permanent housing. Whereas we support this bill, we'd like to suggest the following amendments:

1. Fund the Housing Placement Program at \$2 Million/year for prevention of homelessness.