



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 518: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Representative Rida T. R. Cabanilla, Chair, and Representative Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Housing; and Representative Mele Carroll, Chair, Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Human Services

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

Hearing: Monday, 1/28/13; 11:00 am; CR 329

Chair Cabanilla, Chair Carroll, and Members, Committees on Housing and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 518, which appropriates funds for the state rent supplement program, for homeless working families or individuals who are ready to rent permanent housing in order to obtain and maintain permanent housing. I am Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison for Catholic Charities Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii strongly supports this bill. We are also a member of Partners in Care, Oahu's coalition of homeless providers, which also supports this bill.

This bill is important in order to create new pathways out of homelessness, especially for working people. Working families and individuals have income to pay rent but it is not sufficient to pay the full market rent. For many homeless people, waiting for public housing seems to be the only option, since it would provide a very low cost rent, only 30% of their income. However, waitlists for this housing are very long. With a little help from a shallow subsidy, working families may be able to more quickly move out of homelessness.

In transitional shelters, homeless families and individuals work hard to change their lives, practice good budgeting, get a job and are ready to pay rent—but they still cannot afford market rents. They participate in job preparation and training at their shelter and/or in community workforce development programs. These programs boost their ability to hold a job and pay rent. A shallow rental subsidy of no more than \$300, after the family pays 40% of their income for rent, would enable these working people to more rapidly move into permanent housing.

We urge your support for funding of **\$1.5 Million for shallow rent subsidies to provide a new and critical option to more rapidly move working families into permanent housing.** This shallow rent subsidy (maximum of \$300/month) would enable 400-500 working homeless families or individuals to move onto permanent housing.

We urge your support for this bill to enhance multiple strategies to end homelessness in our State.





Community Alliance for Mental Health

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To: The Hawai'i State House of Representatives Committees on Housing and Human Services
Re: HB 518

To: The Honorable Representatives Cabanilla and Carroll and the members of their committees.

Aloha,

The Community Alliance for Mental Health along with United Self Help strongly supports HB 518. The State Rent Supplement program is a crucial support in the battle against homelessness.

When a person becomes homeless, whether because they lost their job, suffer from mental illness, or substance abuse, the process of recovery is a long process. It is not just getting retrained for a new job, finding a mental health program, or the kicking of an addiction.

That is only the beginning. To really rejoin the community one must find a place to live. If you are living on General Assistance or perhaps at the lowest level of S.S.I. (about \$770 a month,) the transition to independent living can be daunting.

It's not just the rent. You all have moved in your lives. It's the first month's rent, the last month's rent, the security deposit, the utilities, and enough to eat for that month. When a person is just getting out of homelessness the odds that they are getting, or better yet have gotten a job that allows for saving up that amount of money are slim.

That is what the Rent Supplement Program is for, the transition from homelessness back to working citizen, or stable supported housing if they are a member of the aged, blind, and disabled community.

When you ask the public what problems our State faces homelessness is always in the top ten, usually in the top five problems listed. If we want to get people off the streets and back to work or into supported housing then the Rent Supplement Program is a must.

Mahalo,

Robert Scott Wall

Vice -President

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 702 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 531-2198 Fax: (808) 534-1199

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Daryl Selman, President
Judith F. Clark, Executive Director
Aloha House
American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii
Bay Clinic, Inc.
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Honolulu
Big Island Substance Abuse Council
Blueprint for Change
Bobby Benson Center
Catholic Charities Hawaii
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC, Inc.
Family Support Hawaii
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.
Hawaii Behavioral Health
Hawaii Student Television
Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition
Hina Mauka Teen Care
Hui Malama Learning Center
Kahi Mohala Behavioral Health
KEY (Kualoa-Heeia Ecumenical Youth)
Project
Kids Hurt Too
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Life Foundation
Marimed Foundation
Maui Youth and Family Services
Palama Settlement
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Planned Parenthood of Hawaii
REAL
Salvation Army Family Intervention Svcs.
Salvation Army Family Treatment Svcs.
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community Center
The Catalyst Group
The Children's Alliance of Hawaii
Waikiki Health Center
Women Helping Women
YWCA of Kauai

January 25, 2013

To: Representative Rida Cabanilla, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Housing

Representative Mele Carroll, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Testimony in Support of SB 518 Relating to Housing

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 518 Relating to Housing.

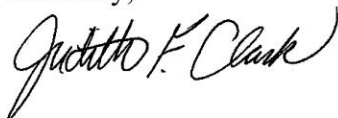
Hawaii has some of the highest costs in the nation for rental housing and many low income, working individuals and families become homeless due to inability to find affordable housing.

Young adults ages 18-24, particularly those who have aged out of foster care, are at high risk of homelessness. Thirty percent (30%) of youth who age out of care at 18 become homeless before they are 21. When homeless, they are at very high risk of exploitation and abuse.

HYSN recommends and requests that these young adults have top priority for rent supplement assistance. If we can help former foster youth to acquire stable housing during those critical years when they are first deal with all of the issues of adult independent living, their chances of becoming healthy, safe, self-sufficient adults is much higher. Stable housing will help them to complete educational and vocational programs that lead to better jobs; prevent involvement with criminal justice systems; and reduce the likelihood that they will need public assistance benefits.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

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Date: January 25, 2013

To: Rep. Rida Cabanilla, House Chair, Rep. Justin Woodson, Vice-Chair, and the Committee on Housing
 Rep. Mele Carroll, House Chair, Rep. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair, and the Committee on Human
 Services

From: Jenny Lee, Staff Attorney
 Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Re: Testimony in favor of HB 518
 Scheduled for a hearing on January 28, 2013

Dear Chair Cabanilla, Chair Carroll, Vice-Chair Woodson, Vice-Chair Kobayashi, and members of the House
 Committee on Housing and Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for an opportunity to testify in strong favor of HB 518, which would appropriate funds for the state
 rent supplement program. This program helps working homeless individuals or families who are ready to rent to
 obtain and maintain permanent housing.

My name is Jenny Lee and I am a staff attorney at the Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
 (formerly Lawyers for Equal Justice). Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice (LEJ) is a
 nonprofit, 501(c)(3) law firm created to advocate on behalf of low income individuals and families in Hawai'i on
 civil legal issues of statewide importance. Our core mission is to help our clients gain access to the resources,
 services, and fair treatment that they need to realize their opportunities for self-achievement and economic
 security.

One of the root causes of homelessness is the simple fact that many families and individuals end up as long-term
 residents of shelters because they are unable to afford market rents. According to the Low Income Housing
 Coalition, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in our state is \$1,647, a figure that would require a
 full-time worker to earn an hourly wage of \$31.68. Yet the state minimum wage is just \$7.25. A shallow rent
 subsidy is critical to addressing this shortfall. More than seventy-five percent of people living in poverty are
 severely overburdened by housing costs, ultimately paying more than half of their income in rent. For those
 experiencing homelessness, this burden is astronomical when coupled with the extremely high cost of living in
 Hawai'i. Meanwhile, low-income individuals have almost nowhere to turn: the waitlist for public housing
 numbers over nine thousand, with applicants waiting at least two to five years for a unit.

A rent supplement is an appropriate solution for individuals and families who are fully capable of renting, but for
 their low income relative to the high cost of housing. Almost thirty percent of individuals receiving shelter
 services are employed full or part-time according to the 2012 Homeless Service Utilization Report. Recipients of
 the rent supplement will be educated in financial literacy and other life skills, or participating in on-the-job
 training programs that would assure they could successfully pay a minimum of forty percent of their income for
 rent.

In its position as an advocate for people experiencing homelessness, LEJ has researched affordable housing and how they can be used to address the homelessness crisis here in Hawai'i. The fundamental solution to this crisis is the creation of more affordable housing, but currently, we are developing just a fraction of the units needed to house low-income individuals. As we progress in the expansion of our affordable housing stock, rent supplements are a key measure to ensure that families who are ready to rent can immediately begin the transition out of homelessness and create a better future. Safe, secure, and stable housing is the fundamental solution to ending homelessness, and for many people experiencing homelessness, a shallow rent subsidy provides serious assistance in obtaining the housing they desperately need.

Again, thank you for providing us with an opportunity to testify in support of HB 518.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Lee", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Jenny Lee
Staff Attorney



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Coalition of Homeless Providers

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 518: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Representative Rida T.R. Cabanilla, Chair; Representative Justin H. Woodson, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Housing, and Representative Mele Carrol, Chair; Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Human Services

FROM: Gladys L. Peraro, Advocacy Committee Co-Chair, Partners In Care (PIC)

Hearing: Monday, 1/28/13; 11:00am; CR 329

Chair Cabanilla, Chair Carroll, and Members, Committees on Housing and Human Services:

Thank you on behalf of Partners In Care (PIC), for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 518. I am Gladys L. Peraro, Advocacy Committee Co-Chair PIC, the coalition care providers focused on the needs of homeless persons and strategies to end homelessness. Partners In Care supports HB 518, which appropriates funds for the state rent supplement program, for homeless working families or individuals who are ready to rent permanent housing in order to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

This bill is important in order to create new pathways out of homelessness, especially important for working people. Working families and individuals have income to pay rent but it is not sufficient to pay the full market rent. For many homeless people, waiting for public housing seems to be the only option they can afford as it provides very low cost rent, only 30% of their income. However, waitlists for this housing are very long- with a little help from a shallow subsidy, working families may be able to move out of homelessness more quickly.

In transitional shelters, homeless families and individuals work hard to change their lives by engaging in life skills such as financial literacy, budgeting, obtaining and retaining employment, and working toward readiness to pay rent—but they still cannot afford market rents. They participate in job preparation and training at their respective shelters and/or in community workforce development programs. These programs boost their ability to hold a job and pay rent, however, a shallow rental subsidy of no more than \$300, after the family pays 40% of their income for rent, would enable these working people to more rapidly move into permanent housing.

We urge your support for funding of **\$1.5 Million for shallow rent subsidies to provide a new and critical option to more rapidly move working families into permanent housing.** This shallow rent subsidy (maximum of \$300/month) would enable 400-500 working homeless families or individuals to move onto permanent housing.

Partners In Care urges you to support this bill as a means to enhance multiple strategies to end homelessness in our State.

Partners In Care, c/o Aloha United Way, 200 N. Vineyard Blvd. Suite 700
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Partners in Care is a membership organization of homeless service providers, other service professionals, units of local and state government, homeless consumers, and other community representatives located in Hawai'i on O'ahu. It is a planning, coordinating, and advocacy body that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill gaps in the Continuum of Care on O'ahu.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEES ON HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES

January 28, 2013 11:00 A.M.
Room 329, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
House Bill No. 518
Relating to Housing

Honorable Chairs and Members of the House Committees on Housing and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding House Bill (H.B.) No. 518, relating to housing.

This measure appropriates \$1.5 million for each fiscal year of fiscal biennium 2013-2015 for a state rent supplement program to assist homeless working individuals or families who are ready to rent permanent housing in order to obtain and maintain permanent housing. The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports this bill with amendments. The HPHA's existing rent supplement program extends not only of homeless families, but also working families who are currently housed but at risk of becoming homeless due to the high rental costs typical of our state. Therefore, the HPHA requests that the Committee amend this measure as follows:

- By removing from the program eligibility the limitation to homeless families, to allow the HPHA to serve more families and to reduce the potential of participating families losing their housing;
- Raising the maximum of \$300 per month to allow the HPHA to provide the subsidy to participating families based on their needs; and
- Increasing the amount of funding for this program, provided that its passage does not adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Biennium Budget.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the House Committees on Housing and Human Services with the agency's position regarding H.B. No. 518. We respectfully request the Committees to pass this measure favorably with the suggested amendments, and we thank you very much for your dedicated support.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
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January 27, 2013

To: The Honorable Rida Cabanilla, Chair
House Committee on Housing

The Honorable Mele Carroll, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

Date: Monday, January 28, 2013
Time: 11:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 329, State Capitol

From: Mila Kaahanui, MSW
Executive Director
Office of Community Services (OCS)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Testimony for House Bill 518, Relating to Housing

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The present bill proposes appropriations for State funds to be used to supplement workforce development activities with a rental stipend incentive for enrolled participants.

The Office of Community Services supports this bill, with a few comments.

II. CURRENT LAW

The Office of Community Services (OCS) is charged to facilitate and enhance the delivery of service to low-income, immigrant, refugee, and other disadvantaged populations. OCS flagship program is currently our Employment Core Services for Low-income Persons, a workforce training, development, placement, and maintenance program designed to provide comprehensive employment supports to ensure the smooth and continuous employment of chronically un- and under-employed individuals.

III. COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL

OCS supports the intent of this bill. We believe prioritizing funds for rental subsidies, especially in the context of well-thought out and organized workforce development plan, will ease the burden on public housing by increasing the number of families and individuals who are able to afford market-level rent.

Rental assistance would be a tremendous incentive for enrollment into workforce development programs, and would assist in the removal of major barrier to self-sufficiency, affordable housing.

OCS does not take a position on the best administrator of these funds, and would like to comment that the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations does house the most extensive workforce development infrastructure, while the Department of Human Services houses Hawaii Public Housing Authority, TANF-funded work programs and the Homeless Branch. OCS would appreciate an opportunity to meet with these parties as well as the committee to design a rental subsidy that would make all of our collective programs more attractive and comprehensive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.