



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 519: 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 provide testimony on HB519, which appropriates funds to continue the implementation of the Housing First model in Hawaii. I am Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison at Catholic Charities Hawaii. Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill.

The Housing First program has proven its success in many states as a way to more effectively address the chronically homeless. These homeless are often the most visible homeless, living in our neighborhoods, doorways, under bridges, etc. These persons experience homelessness over a long period of time and incur very significant public costs. Housing First assists them to gain permanent housing and then provides the services needed to keep them in housing and successfully transition off the streets.

In 2012, 100 medically vulnerable unsheltered homeless individuals were identified during the 100K Homes Campaign on Oahu. Homeless providers are currently working collaborative and aggressively to house these targeted vulnerable individuals. Housing is only the first step – they will need ongoing services to ensure that they are able to address their health and social needs.

The Housing First program can provide a means through which many of these 100 medically vulnerable unsheltered homeless individuals can receive the services they need. The benefit to these individuals is an improvement to their quality, and quantity, of life. The benefit to our community is reduced cost since the latest information on Partners In Care's "What is the Cost of Homelessness?" states:

- 38% of all public costs for those who are unsheltered are health care costs.
- The average public cost for an unsheltered homeless person is \$2,897 per month vs. the average public cost for a resident in supportive housing is \$605 per month. Public costs can be decreased by 79% by providing supportive housing with services.

We also support the Governor's budget which increases the funding to \$1.5 million for the Housing First program. This increase would enable Housing First to expand beyond urban Honolulu to other areas, including the Neighbor Islands. We urge your support to continue and expand Housing First to reduce the public costs and to move the most vulnerable off our streets. Thank you.



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To: The Hawai'i State House of Representatives Committees on Housing and Human Services
Re: HB 519

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 wholeheartedly supports HB 519.

Housing First is critical to the transformation of the delivery of care to our most vulnerable populations. Socially it may not be pretty but it works!

Homelessness is constantly listed as one of the primary problems in Hawai'i these days. However the problems go beyond those known to the general public. The homeless are inclined to use the Emergency Room for their primary care. We all know that the E.R. is one of the most expensive rooms on the planet. The homeless also have one of the highest rates of recidivism among our citizens. Prison can cost society up to \$50,000 a year.

Housing First programs are evidence based, have been in practice for years, their education modules are extant, and they can save society up to \$10,000 per person per annum in reduced medical services and criminal justice costs.

If we want to get the homeless off the streets and reduce the State's Medicaid cost then Housing First will be one of the pillars supporting that goal.

Mahalo,

Robert Scott Wall
Vice-President

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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 519
 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 519, which would appropriate funds for the
 Department of Human Services to continue administering housing first programs for chronically homeless
 individuals in Hawai'i. Providing people who have experienced chronic homelessness with stable and decent
 housing is crucial to ending the homelessness crisis we are experiencing.

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.

Housing first, also known as "rapid re-housing," has been adopted in many parts of the country as a major tactic
 to end chronic homelessness by helping individuals secure and retain permanent housing. It is an evidence-based
 practice that reduces chronic homelessness, improves the health and well-being of formerly homeless
 individuals, and lowers costs. The housing first model stabilizes individuals' housing situation and provides
 comprehensive support services so that participants can address the other issues they face, such as mental illness,
 substance abuse, and chronic health conditions.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness has endorsed housing first as a "best practice" that has
 shown great success in reducing chronic homelessness and improving outcomes for participants. For example,
 Utah's statewide implementation of a housing first program has resulted in an incredible 72 percent decrease in
 the number of chronically homeless individuals since 2005. Homelessness has been reduced enough that they
 have actually closed emergency shelters. Communities throughout the nation have recognized similar results.

Those placed in housing show improved mental and physical health, decreases in substance use, and overall
 quality of life. Visits to emergency rooms, hospitalizations, outpatient treatment, detox services, incarceration,
 and shelter utilization are dramatically reduced when chronically homeless individuals are placed in housing. Not
 only does housing first result in positive outcomes for participants, but it also saves the state significant amounts

of money. By lowering the usage of these services, states and municipalities have saved thousands or tens of thousands of dollars per individual, even when the cost of permanent housing and services is factored in. Over time, this adds up to millions of dollars. Placement in housing can also help individuals take full advantage of benefits to which they are entitled, increasing their financial stability.

In its position as an advocate for people experiencing homelessness, LEJ has researched affordable housing and how to address the homelessness crisis here in Hawai'i. Housing first has been extensively studied and has shown the type of results we desperately need in Hawai'i. An investment in housing first not only saves money, but most importantly, it dramatically increases the health and well-being of individuals who have experienced homelessness for far too long.

Again, thank you for providing us with an opportunity to testify in support of HB 519.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jenny Lee", 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 519: 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 519. 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 519, which appropriates funds to continue the implementation of the Housing First model in Hawaii.

The Housing First program has proven its success in many states as a way to more effectively address the chronically homeless population whom we serve. These homeless are often the most visible homeless, living in our neighborhoods, doorways, under bridges, etc. These persons experience homelessness over a long period of time and incur very significant public costs. Housing First assists them to gain permanent housing and then provides the services needed to successfully transition them off the streets and into permanent housing opportunities.

In 2012, 100 medically vulnerable unsheltered homeless individuals were identified during the 100,000 Homes Campaign on Oahu. Homeless providers are currently working collaborative and aggressively to house these targeted chronically homeless, vulnerable and medically fragile individuals. Housing is only the first step – they will need ongoing services to ensure that they are able to address their health and social needs.

The Housing First program can provide a means through which many of these 100 vulnerable and medically fragile unsheltered homeless individuals can receive the services they need. The benefit to these individuals is an improvement to their quality, and quantity, of life- it is estimated that left unchecked the life expectancy of these chronically homeless individuals is 25 year less than the average citizen. Additional benefits to our community are reduced cost- the most current information on Partners In Care's "What is the Cost of Homelessness?" information document states:

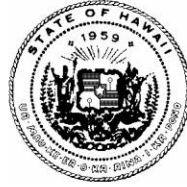
- 38% of all public costs for those who are unsheltered are health care costs.
- The average public cost for an unsheltered homeless person is \$2,897 per month vs. the average public cost for a resident in supportive housing is \$605 per month. Public costs can be decreased by 79% by providing supportive housing with services.

We also support the Governor's budget which increases the funding to \$1.5 million for the Housing First program.

This increase would enable Housing First to expand beyond urban Honolulu to other areas, including the Neighbor Islands. We urge your support to continue and expand Housing First to reduce the public costs and to move the most vulnerable off our streets. Thank you.

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
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

January 28, 2013

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Mele Carroll, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Rida T.R. Cabanilla, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 519 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Monday, January 28, 2013; 11:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

PURPOSE: H.B. 519 appropriates \$1,000,000 or so much as may be necessary in fiscal year 2013-14 to the Department of Human Services to continue to administer Housing First programs for chronically homeless individuals in the State.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services appreciates the overall intent of this bill as it is supportive of our objectives. The Housing First program, as administered by the Department, has been successful in engaging and placing some of urban Honolulu's most chronically homeless and vulnerable individuals into stable housing. A rich array of support services (substance abuse, mental health, general health/disability treatment) has been accessed to help provide the "wrap around" services that are necessary to maintain this population in stable housing situations.

The Department asks that the Legislature support the Department's priorities as requested in the Executive Budget submitted by Governor Abercrombie which contains a request for \$1,500,000 for continuation of the Housing First Program, and expansion beyond urban Honolulu to other areas of Oahu and to the neighbor islands.

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