



HB659
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources, & Hawaiian Affairs

February 6, 2013

9:00 a.m.

Room 325

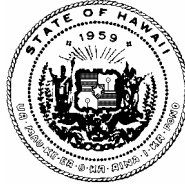
The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers the following **COMMENTS** on HB659. This bill requires Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL), Department of Health (DOH), and OHA to develop a kanaka village homeless pilot program.

There are many efforts currently underway to address Hawai'i's homeless situation. HB1347 is a temporary housing proposal involving The Interagency Council on Homelessness and DHHL lands. While these projects have different targets and it is important to provide a spectrum of solutions for the homeless, it may be helpful to combine the expertise of the Interagency Council on Homelessness with HB659.

Hawai'i is in dire need of affordable housing. The lack of such housing creates instability for many families, including the families of OHA's beneficiaries. In an attempt to promote systemic change in this area, OHA's strategic plan identifies making rentals more affordable and increasing homeownership as strategic results. OHA is accomplishing these goals through its grants program, partnerships, and advocacy. Currently, OHA is reviewing grant proposals for fiscal year 2014-15, which offers \$900,000 in grants for housing services for Native Hawaiians. From fiscal year 2008-2012, OHA has granted nearly \$16 million for Housing and Homeless services, including financial literacy, home repair, services for incarcerated and homeless Hawaiians, and easier access to home loans. This in addition to grants provided for educational opportunities and better health services.

OHA welcomes the opportunity to further participate on an issue that is not only critical to the Native Hawaiian community but also to the entire State of Hawai'i. We note that many homeless, not just Native Hawaiians, choose to not live in homeless shelters for a variety of reasons. In light of other work being done in this area, we suggest also bringing in the Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Governor's homeless coordinator.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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

February 6, 2013

TO: The Honorable Faye P. Hanohano, Chair
House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources, & Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Patricia McManaman, Director

SUBJECT: **H.B. 659 - RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 6, 2013; 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to require the Department of Human Services (DHS), in collaboration with the Department of Hawaiian Homelands (DHHL), the Department of Health,, and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, to develop a pilot program to establish a kanaka village for the homeless; require the DHS to report to the legislature; and appropriates general funds.

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services supports the desire to end homelessness but opposes the strategy and approach set forth in H.B. 659 because it is inconsistent with best practices and policies endorsed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness chaired by General Eric Shinseki, and the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness, all of which support permanent supportive housing as the most effective means to end homelessness.

The DHS also has concerns that section 1 of the bill mandates the DHS to develop a homeless village on DHHL property without adequately addressing the trust issues implicated when DHHL Trust Lands are removed from the trust and developed by another agency (DHS) for a homeless population that may not be the same as the class of trust beneficiaries set forth in the Hawaiian Homestead Commission Act, the Hawaii State Constitution, and the Hawaii Revised Statutes. The DHS defers to the DHHL to advise the House of Representatives of these issues and concerns arising out of DHHL's trust responsibilities to its native Hawaiian beneficiaries, and which we are raising here in our written testimony.

The DHS has further concerns that section 1 mandates the DHS to develop a kanaka village, a set of tasks it presently does not have the capacity to accomplish. If such a proposal is desired, then perhaps the DHHL could be assigned this responsibility, given its longstanding experience as a developer of housing for its class of native Hawaiian beneficiaries.

The DHS believes that collaboration and coordination is key if homelessness is to be addressed and ended. The DHS is also aware that the largest demographic of homeless families and children in Hawaii are Native Hawaiian, and that both the DHHL and the DHS have substantial roles to play if we are to address the needs of Native Hawaiians who are homeless in their homelands. The DHS believes that collaboration and coordination between these two agencies is possible through existing administrative and executive channels, and that a legislative proposal at this juncture is premature and will raise more questions than it will answer.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on this bill.

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Unity, Equality, Aloha for All

To: OMH, FIN
From: Kenneth R. Conklin, Ph.D.
Re: HB659 re "kanaka villages for the homeless"
Date: February 4, 2013

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION

1. It might be good to help homeless people by setting up special places where they can be safe and have access to toilets and showers without causing fear or inconvenience to families and tourists using park facilities.
2. It's good that the proposal is to provide special places for homeless PEOPLE rather than for homeless dogs or cats. The word "kanaka" means "person" or "human being."
3. Race, or "Native Hawaiian", is not mentioned in this bill. However, the word "kanaka" in modern usage has come to refer specifically to people who have at least one drop of Hawaiian native blood. Especially when a bill has been introduced by Mele Carroll, and is referred to the committee on Hawaiian Affairs, the word "kanaka" is clearly a racial reference.
4. A "kanaka village for the homeless" would be contrary to law if it is exclusively or preferentially for people who have Hawaiian native blood. The time for racial segregation in housing is long gone. Even privately-owned gated communities are no longer allowed to have racial covenants restricting who can live there.
5. Aside from being illegal, it would also be immoral. People should be treated equally by our government regardless of race. Homeless people are entitled to the same equality under the law as people who are more fortunate.



David Derauf, M.D.
 Marc Fleischaker, Esq.
 Naomi C. Fujimoto, Esq.
 Patrick Gardner, Esq.
 Francis T. O'Brien, Esq.
 David J. Reber, Esq.

Victor Geminiani, Esq.

Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
 Supporting HB 659 Relating to Homelessness
 House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources & Hawaiian Affairs
 Scheduled for Hearing on Wednesday, February 6, 2013, 9:00 AM, Room 325

Thank you for an opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 659, which would establish a pilot program creating a kanaka village for the homeless.

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice 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.

Hawai'i's homelessness problem has reached crisis proportions:

- Hawai'i's rate of homelessness is the third highest among the states.
- Around 27 percent of those using shelter or outreach programs are Native Hawaiian or part Native Hawaiian according to the 2012 Homeless Service Utilization Report.
- Hawai'i faces a severe affordable housing shortfall, with many individuals residing long-term in shelters because no permanent affordable housing is available.
- By 2016, Hawai'i will require 13,000 additional rental units to meet the demand for affordable housing according to the Hawai'i Housing Planning Survey.

By combining housing with critical social services and a culturally-based approach, the proposed kanaka village could be one innovative solution among many to a complex problem. Individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds become homeless for many different reasons, and other than placement in stable permanent housing, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Despite the efforts of the state and social service providers, homelessness has not significantly abated, and many members of our community remain on the streets or in shelters intended for short-term emergency use. It is time to experiment with new options such as the kanaka village so that this problem is approached from all angles.

We respectfully encourage the pilot program to take advantage of the bill's provision for the use of structures other than tents. Ultra-affordable yet durable and sustainable housing options could include:

- Well-designed single or multi-unit container housing refitted as standard housing
- Yurt-style structures built from sturdy materials
- Pre-fabricated cottages or those made from affordable materials such as bamboo
- Structures relying on traditional building methods
- Micro-houses inspired by designs such as the Rural Studio's "\$20,000 House" or portable houses

Should the pilot prove successful, these structures could be used for years on-site. In the event the pilot program is discontinued, structures could be moved and used again, or reconstructed out of the existing materials.

We also respectfully urge that appropriations for other agency programs remain stable so that this pilot does not impact other important efforts.

February 4, 2013

TO: Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources, and Hawaiian Affairs

Hearing: February 6, 2013, 9:00 a.m., Conference Room 325

FROM: Gabriele Chapman, University of Hawaii

RE: Support of HB 659, Relating to Homelessness

Representative Faye Hanohano Chair, Representative Ty Cullen Vice Chair, and members of the Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources and Hawaiian Affairs, I am Gabriele Chapman, an MSW student at the University of Hawaii. I strongly support HB 658, Relating to Homelessness.

I strongly support this bill for the following reasons:

- I have been involved in homeless feedings for several years, serving smaller homeless groups in Neal Blaisdell Park and Wahiawa. Homeless shelters are not easily accessible for these groups of people.
- After having numerous conversations with some of the “regulars,” I have come to the conclusion that most of these adults have chosen their current lifestyle.
- Even if a shelter was nearby, most would not utilize it for many reasons, to include dogs, illegal habits, girlfriends, etc. Imagine packing up your belongings each morning, toting them around all day, and waiting for hours each evening, hoping to win a place in a crowded shelter. Not only is this cumbersome, it does not respect quality of life for these unfortunate individuals.
- Many dwell in parks, since bathrooms are accessible during the day. Once they become settled and establish friendships and routines, our overburdened police are called in to relocate these homeless people and store their belongings in containers.
- On and on goes this cycle: they get kicked out, relocate, get kicked out, relocate, etc.
- To respect their decision to remain homeless and to satisfy tourists and others who are frustrated by parks and sidewalks littered with humans, Kanaka villages are a perfect solution. Not only will we be maintaining their dignity and quality of life, we will also be able to provide valuable services to them which may allow some of them to reenter society.

I urge your favorable consideration of HB659.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

omhtestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 05, 2013 12:08 AM
To: omhtestimony
Cc: kmaquino@hawaii.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB659 on Feb 6, 2013 09:00AM

Categories: OMH 02-06-13 9am

HB659

Submitted on: 2/5/2013

Testimony for OMH on Feb 6, 2013 09:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kamakana Aquino	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments: I do not support this bill to develop and implement a "pilot" program to establish a "kanaka village." Allocating resources to develop a "pilot" program seems that we do not know and understand what the homeless issues and problems are, therefore, allocating resources to pilot something seems wasteful. Where will this "kanaka village" be located? Although majority of our homeless people are Hawaiian, I also oppose the use of the word "kanaka," as it is a Hawaiian word and can refer to Hawaiian people. These are some of my mana'o that I hope you will consider.

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omhtestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 8:29 PM
To: omhtestimony
Cc: starr@maui.net
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB659 on Feb 6, 2013 09:00AM

Categories: OMH 02-06-13 9am

HB659

Submitted on: 2/4/2013

Testimony for OMH on Feb 6, 2013 09:00AM in Conference Room 325

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hugh Starr	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Aloha House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources, and Hawaiian Affairs: I support HB659; I have been an agricultural lands consultant and Realtor for over 40 years on Maui and have witnessed the severe and tragic homelessness problem get worse by every year, most especially afflicting members of our Native Hawaiian community. This bill will provide critically needed collaboration and funding to hopefully find serious workable solutions for the Native Hawaiian homeless community. Thank you, Hugh Starr, Makawao, Maui

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