

Community Alliance for Mental Health

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To: The State of Hawai'i House of Representatives Committee on Human Services
Re: HB 868

To: The Honorable Representative Carroll and the members of the committee.

Aloha,

The Community Alliance for Mental Health along with United Self Help strongly supports HB 868. The requirement of an asset limit for people receiving TANF funds limits the ability of a family from moving out of poverty and government assistance. There is no way that one can save the first months' rent, last months' rent, security deposit, the money to turn on the utilities, and eat for the first month if they cannot bank those funds.

One of the primary goals of the Department of Human Services is to help people get back on their feet and rejoin the workforce. The asset limit works directly against that goal.

Mahalo,
Robert Scott Wall
Vice-President

LATE TESTIMONY



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Hawaii Women's Coalition

Committee on Human Services

Representative Mele Carroll, Chair

Representative Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 31, 2013

09:30 am

Room 329

SUPPORT FOR HB868 – Eliminating the Asset Limit Eligibility for TANF Recipients

Aloha Chair Carroll and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Women's Coalition is in strong support of this measure and urges you to pass it out of committee.

The TANF program requires individuals to work and purports to promote self-reliance, responsibility and family stability. However, asset limitations for public benefit programs provide an incentive for low-income families to get rid of, or choose not to accumulate, assets. That in turn tends to keep recipients from being able to move out of the cycle of poverty.

The federal government gives to the states the flexibility to raise or eliminate their asset tests for most applicants. Eliminating the asset limit would help families build assets. Building assets provides a safety net for a family, so they can continue to work their way to self-sufficiency and prevent their return to public benefit assistance programs. It's a win-win for TANF recipients and for the taxpayer.

Mahalo,

Ann S. Freed
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