



SB1099
RELATING TO ELIMINATING THE ASSET LIMIT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT
FOR THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM
Senate Committee on Human Services

February 5, 2013

1:15pm

Conference Room 016

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) strongly **SUPPORTS** SB1099 because eliminating the asset limit for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program will encourage TANF recipients to accumulate more assets to improve their financial conditions. OHA supports this bill because it aligns with our strategic priority of helping Native Hawaiians receiving become more economically self-sufficient. In 2012, more Native Hawaiians received benefits from the TANF and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families programs than any other ethnic group in the state¹.

Asset limits are intended to target public dollars to our most needy and vulnerable populations. However, asset limits have an unintended consequence: they provide an incentive for individuals to divest themselves of assets and a disincentive to accumulate assets. This is problematic, as families need assets to escape poverty and become self-sufficient.

Financial savings and asset accumulation enables our neediest families to maintain a safety net to self-sufficiency, prevent job loss and avoid a return to public assistance. At the same time, families would have an opportunity to build assets toward retirement, which would lessen their dependence on government in their old age.

Reforming asset limits for public assistance programs is a growing trend nationally. Several states have increased the asset limits for public assistance programs, and five states (Ohio, Virginia, Louisiana, Alabama and Maryland) have completely eliminated their asset limits for TANF, which has resulted in little to no change in caseload and reduced administrative costs.

Therefore, OHA urges the committee to **PASS** SB1099. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

¹ STATE OF HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DATABOOK, PAGE 4 (2013) (Hawaiian/Part-Hawaiian represent 33.5 percent of state TANF and TAONF recipients)

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2013 11:13 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: annsfreed@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB1099 on Feb 5, 2013 13:15PM

SB1099

Submitted on: 2/4/2013

Testimony for HMS on Feb 5, 2013 13:15PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ann S. Freed	Hawai'i Women's Coalition	Support	No

Comments: COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair Senator Josh Green, Vice Chair DATE: Tuesday, February 5, 2013 TIME: 1:15 pm PLACE: Conference Room 016 Aloha Chair Chun Oakland, Vice Chair Green and committee members, The Coalition is in strong support of SB1099. This bill eliminating the Asset Limit Eligibility Requirement for the TANF Program will help provide a future for Hawaii's needy families. Asset limitations for public benefit programs provide an incentive for low- income families to get rid of, or choose not to accumulate, assets. The TANF program requires work and promotes self-reliance, responsibility and family stability. The federal government gives 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. There has been significant national discourse regarding asset limits for public benefit assistance recipients, and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) has recommended eliminating the asset test. Alabama, Louisiana, Maryland, Ohio and Virginia have completely eliminated asset tests for TANF recipients. Research shows that most applicants to TANF programs have very few assets, and in other states, eliminating asset tests greatly simplifies program administration without significantly increasing caseloads. According to the US Department of Health & Human Services, 85% of adult TANF recipients are women, and 90% of adult recipients are the head of the household. The elimination of TANF asset limits will allow low-income women, particularly single mothers, to begin to build needed assets that will assist families in moving toward self-sufficiency and long-term financial stability. Mahalo nui loa, Ann S. Freed Co-Chair, Hawai'i Women's Coalition 808-623-5676

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov



Community Alliance for Mental Health

Board of Directors

Anne Chipchase
President

Robert Scott Wall
Vice President

Crystal Aguinaldo
Secretary

William Lennox
Treasurer

Sunny Algosio

Jessica Carroll

Randolph Hack

Gina Hungerford

Susan King

To: The Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Human Services
Re: SB 1099

To: The Honorable Senator Chun-Oakland and the members of the committee.

Aloha,

The Community Alliance for Mental Health along with United Self Help strongly supports SB 1099. Affordable housing for our most vulnerable populations' remains one of the strongest challenges we as a community face.

When a person falls into the safety net whether that is from a lost job, mental illness, or substance abuse the hardest thing is climbing out of that net. With the asset limit to TANF eliminated it will be possible to save up for that firsts months' rent, last months' rent, deposit, getting the utilities turned on, and food.

Without that little bit of extra help it can seem to daunting a challenge and one can remained bemired in poverty.

Mahalo,

Robert Scott Wall
Vice-President