

# **SCR 137 / SR 98**

Measure Title: REQUESTING THE COORDINATOR ON HOMELESSNESS TO ASSEMBLE A WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY INNOVATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESS NATIVE HAWAIIAN FAMILIES; INVESTIGATE SUITABLE AND AVAILABLE FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, AND PRIVATE LAND FOR INNOVATIVE HOUSING PROJECTS; AND PREPARE A PLAN TO DEVELOP A DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT FOR HOMELESS NATIVE HAWAIIAN FAMILIES THAT CAN SERVE AS A MODEL STATEWIDE.

Report Title: Homeless; Native Hawaiians; Working Group

Description:

Companion:

Package: None

Current Referral: HMS/THA/WTL, WAM

Introducer(s): KAHELE, CHUN OAKLAND, GALUTERIA, SHIMABUKURO, Baker, Dela Cruz, English, Keith-Agaran, Kouchi, Nishihara, Solomon



**SCR137 / SR98**

**REQUESTING THE COORDINATOR ON HOMELESSNESS TO ASSEMBLE A WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY INNOVATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESS NATIVE HAWAIIAN FAMILIES; INVESTIGATE SUITABLE AND AVAILABLE FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, AND PRIVATE LAND FOR INNOVATIVE HOUSING PROJECTS; AND PREPARE A PLAN TO DEVELOP A DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT FOR HOMELESS NATIVE HAWAIIAN FAMILIES THAT CAN SERVE AS A MODEL STATEWIDE.**

Senate Committee on Human Services  
Senate Committee on Tourism and Hawaiian Affairs  
Senate Committee on Water and Land

April 1, 2013

2:45 p.m.

Room 224

The Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment (BAE) committee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers **comments** on SCR137 / SR98SB, which requests the coordinator on homelessness to assemble a working group to identify solutions for homeless Native Hawaiian families.

The work requested in this resolution is in line with the Interagency Council On Homelessness (ICH) draft plan to end homelessness in Hawai'i. Many of the partners listed in the resolution are either already part of the interagency council or would be readily welcome to any of the meetings.

Work in this area is difficult because the agencies are asked to do more with no additional resources and are expected to handle the disastrous effects from the cuts of mental health and substance abuse programs during the economic downturn.

Agencies like the Department of Hawaiian Homelands can speak directly to their work on developing a kauhale housing model.

OHA's most recent work in this area includes but is not limited to:

- Supporting Hawaiian Community Assets tremendous work in creating a financial foundation for homeless families.
- Creating \$900,000 in grant opportunities for housing.
- Providing long-term stable financial support to DHHL.
- Developing leveraged funding opportunities to increase reentry programs for pa'ahao.

In conclusion, this resolution could be better directed as an initiative for the ICH to lead and report on. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SCR137 on Apr 1, 2013 14:45PM\*  
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SCR137

Submitted on: 3/31/2013

Testimony for HMS/THA/WTL on Apr 1, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
colin kippen	Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness	Support	Yes

Comments:

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**TESTIMONY ON SCR 137 AND SR 98 REQUESTING THE COORDINATOR ON HOMELESSNESS TO ASSEMBLE A WORKING GROUP TO IDENTIFY INNOVATIVE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESS NATIVE HAWAIIAN FAMILIES; INVESTIGATE SUITABLE AND AVAILABLE FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, AND PRIVATE LAND FOR INNOVATIVE HOUSING PROJECTS; AND PREPARE A PLAN TO DEVELOP A DEMONSTRATION HOUSING PROJECT FOR HOMELESS NATIVE HAWAIIAN FAMILIES THAT CAN SERVE AS A MODEL STATEWIDE BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES, TOURISM AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, AND WATER AND LAND**

April 1, 2013

2:45 PM

Conference Rm. 224

Aloha Chairs Chun Oakland, Galuteria, and Solomon, and Vice-Chairs Green, Keith-Agaran, and Shimabukuro and members of the Senate Committees on Human Services, Tourism and Hawaiian Affairs, and Water and Land, **my name is Stephen Morse. I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change (BFC) and am here today to support SCR 137 and SR 98.**

Members, for the record, BFC is the fiscal, technical, and administrative support entity for five Neighborhood Place centers statewide that provide support and strengthening services to families at risk of child abuse and neglect under a POS contract with the Department of Human Services. Our Neighborhood Place programs are unique among CAN prevention programs for two reasons: (1) they are the only places where children and families at risk of child abuse and neglect can get services without a referral or appointment and by simply knocking on the door; and (2) because many of the children and families we serve are Native Hawaiian, the NP services are culturally congruent, and for the most part, non-clinical.

We find that one of the biggest risk factors for child neglect in the Native Hawaiian families we serve is that they are homeless, and often, homelessness becomes a revolving door for these families because of a myriad of other socioeconomic problems they are mired in, including unemployment and low incomes, substance abuse, and chronic health problems. If we are going to break the cycle of homelessness and prevent the generational neglect of children within these families, we need to develop innovative housing solutions that provide these families with both stable housing and access to wrap around social services, and perhaps, it's time we turn to more traditional ways to lead Native Hawaiian families out of homelessness.

Made popular by a book written several years ago by former Secretary of State and First Lady, Hillary Clinton, the concept of "it takes a village" to raise a child was actually practiced by Native Hawaiians for hundreds of years prior to and after the arrival of Westerners. Members of an extended `ohana lived in small villages, in complexes called, "Kauhale," and child rearing was a village/complex responsibility. These kauhale were clusters of living, cooking, eating, meeting, storage, and ancillary shelters. At the center of the village or within the kauhale themselves, was a larger shelter called a "halau," which was used for larger meetings, teaching, kukakuka (discussions) on village issues, and to air grievances and making things right, or "ho'oponopono."

Several years ago when I was employed as the Chief Housing Officer for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Richard "Likeke" Paglinawan, an esteemed Social Worker and Hawaiian Cultural Practitioner who was serving as OHA's Administrator at the time, shared with me a manuscript he had written on the Hawaiian "Kauhale." What struck me was how perfectly designed the Kauhale was for the extended

members of an `ohana, because besides sharing daily responsibilities such as cooking or child rearing, it kept the other important aspect of an `ohana intact, problem-solving.

The point I'm trying to make in this testimony is that by the enactment of these resolutions, we could use the demonstration housing project called for in these resolutions as the means to re-create a Kauhale complex, or other innovative housing solutions, for Native Hawaiian families that would not only stabilize their living situations, but through connecting to their culture, help them resolve their underlying socioeconomic problems with support from each other and social service providers like Neighborhood Places.

Recently, State Homeless Coordinator, Colin Kippen, organized a group of social service providers, including myself, and asked for help in coming up with solutions for the Native Hawaiian homeless. I am confident that this working group is ready and willing to work with the Legislature and executive branch of government to make the plan called for in SCR 137 and SR 98 a reality.

Aloha and Mahalo for allowing us the opportunity to testify this afternoon.

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Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Supporting SCR 137/SR 98  
Senate Committee on Human Services  
Senate Committee on Tourism and Hawaiian Affairs  
Senate Committee on Water and Land  
Scheduled for Joint Hearing Monday, April 1, 2013, 2:45 PM, Room 224

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*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.*

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Thank you for an opportunity to testify in **support** of Senate Concurrent Resolution 137 and Senate Resolution 98, which would encourage the creation of a working group to identify innovative housing solutions for Native Hawaiian families experiencing homelessness and develop a pilot project.

Hawai'i's homelessness problem has reached crisis proportions, particularly among Native Hawaiians:

- 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 families residing long-term in shelters because no permanent affordable housing is available.

Many creative housing options exist, including ultra-affordable small houses or multi-family dwellings:

- Models and designs abound from around the country, and this task force is an opportunity to compile successful models and how to apply them to Hawai'i.
- A number of programs, such as the Sustainable Native Communities Collaborative, have specialized in the creation of affordable housing for indigenous peoples that incorporates traditional cultural values, practices, and living arrangements with practical housing designs that meet families' needs today.
- Elsewhere, ultra-affordable housing has been developed, such as the Rural Studio's "\$20,000 House" designed in close collaboration with low-income clients living in Alabama's Black Belt region.

A housing pilot targeted at Native Hawaiian families is one innovative solution among many to a complex problem. Housing is a fundamental human need that must be met before individuals experiencing homelessness can address issues such as managing mental illness or finding employment. Despite the efforts of the state and social service providers, homelessness has not significantly abated, and many members of our community remain in shelters because of lack of affordable housing. It is absolutely critical that we begin to take meaningful action to create permanent housing. One such approach is to experiment with new options such as a housing pilot so that this problem is approached from all angles.

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SCR137

Submitted on: 3/28/2013

Testimony for HMS/THA/WTL on Apr 1, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SR98 on Apr 1, 2013 14:45PM  
**Date:** Friday, March 29, 2013 7:32:53 AM

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SR98

Submitted on: 3/29/2013

Testimony for HMS/THA/WTL on Apr 1, 2013 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Troy Abraham	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support urgent passage of this bill to end homelessness in Hawaii for good and help transit there homeless people on path to recovery and self sustainability.

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