



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 25, 2014 9:05 A.M.
Room 211, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of

**House Bill 1539, House Draft 1, Senate Draft 1
Relating to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's Administration of the
Housing Choice Voucher Program**

Honorable Chair Ige and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding House Bill (HB) 1539, House Draft 1 (HD1), Senate Draft 1 (SD1) relating to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's administration of the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) strongly supports the enactment of this measure, which would only allow original household members to retain a federal Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and prevent the "inheriting" of HCVs to family and friends.

The Housing Choice Voucher program allows people to live outside of public housing, in private market rentals, and does not have an expiration date. Currently, it is permissible for original members of the household to add more people to the existing household. Therefore, when the original household members leave the Housing Choice Voucher Program, the new people that were subsequently added to the household, end up "inheriting" the voucher. This practice circumvents the waitlist process and adds to the slow movement on the waitlist. Needy families on the waitlist are then forced to wait that much longer for their chance at housing assistance.

The "inheriting" of HCVs is not a problem that is unique to Hawaii. Agencies that administer the HCV program across the nation are experiencing this situation. The HPHA investigated and found that the person with the longest serving voucher is over 3 decades, and over 50 known cases of "inheriting" of HCVs at the HPHA.

Hawaii Public Housing Authority

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The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Senate Committee on Ways and Means with the agency's position regarding HB 1539, HD1, SD1. We respectfully request the Committee to pass this measure favorably, and we thank you very much for your dedicated support.



Community Alliance for Mental Health

March, 15, 2014

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To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Re: HB 1539, HD 1, SD 1

Aloha Chair Ige and the members of the committee,

On behalf of the Community Alliance for Mental Health along with United Self Help we support the passage of HB 1539, HD 1, SD 1.

Scott Wall
Vice President for Policy
Community Alliance for Mental Health



Committee on Ways and Means
March 25, 2014 – 9:05
State Capitol, CR 211

**Testimony of
Homeless and Affordable Housing Institute (HAHI)**

Senator Ige and members of WAM,

I stand in strong support of HB 1539 that would help make more available the limited housing resources of Public Housing Authority.

Currently, when a family applies for public housing they will continue to keep the housing after they move out by allowing their relatives to take over the public housing unit.

This bill would limit the tenancy of public housing when the last original tenant moves out. If the parents move out, the children would also have to move upon reaching age 21.

This will free up available public housing to provide fair opportunities for people on the waiting list to participate in the public housing voucher program voucher.

Considering our very limited available affordable housing, surrendering a voucher by last original household member is essential for fair access for everyone one on the huge public housing waiting list.

Christopher Ching



Committee on Ways and Means
March 25, 2014 – 9:05 AM
Testimony of Anmercil Lamayo Romaguera
In support of HB 1539

Dear Chair Ige and members of the Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of HB1539 which requires surrendering of housing voucher upon vacancy of unit by last **original** household member and allows surviving minor or guardian to retain voucher until that minor reaches age 21. There are hundreds of people waiting to get into public housing, and far fewer vacancies. I am in support of this measure because it prevents multi-generational families from living in public housing for a time beyond what was originally intended.

I understand that there are unexpected circumstances that cannot be foreseen upon moving into public housing, such as incarceration, injury, or death of original voucher recipients. In those cases, allowing surviving minors to retain the voucher helps to protect them from potential poverty and homelessness. However, the vouchers should not be passed down from generation to generation, sometimes occupying these units for decades.

Furthermore, the families that are in need right *now*, those on the waiting list for public housing, can be waiting for years and forced to move into unsafe neighborhoods or worse. This measure is a step in the right direction to putting an end to the list of people waiting for public housing. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

Anmercil Lamayo Romaguera