



**HAWAII CATHOLIC CONFERENCE**  
6301 Pali Highway  
Kaneohe, HI 96744-5224



**Submitted:** Online  
**Hearing on:** Tuesday, March 25, 2014 @ 9:05 a.m.  
**Conference Room:** 211

**DATE:** March 24, 2014  
**TO:** Senate Committee on Ways & Means  
Sen. David Ige, Chair  
Sen. Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair  
**From:** Walter Yoshimitsu, Executive Director  
**Re:** Support of HB 2059 HD2 SD1 Relating to Housing

Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means, I am Walter Yoshimitsu, representing the Hawaii Catholic Conference. The Hawaii Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Roman Catholic Church in the State of Hawaii, which under the leadership of Bishop Larry Silva, represents Roman Catholics in Hawaii.

We support HB 2059 HD2 SD1 because homelessness continues to be one of the State's most significant and challenging social problems. The Diocese of Honolulu supports any strategic plan that makes homelessness and affordable housing one of its primary areas of focus. For many households in Hawaii at risk of becoming homeless, high housing costs mean skimping on food and medical care, moving frequently to find lower rents—creating periods of homelessness. As people of faith, we simply cannot sit back and watch while families fall apart.

**WE STRONGLY SUPPORT THE RENTAL HOUSING TRUST FUND AND HAVE SINCE ITS INCEPTION.** This bill appropriates much needed funding for deposit into the rental housing trust fund to finance affordable rental housing development. We strongly believe that the funding used by the RHTF has consistently produced much-needed housing. Recent statistics show that over 4,000 homes have been created utilizing this fund. That is a great accomplishment in this dire economy but it is simply not enough. We know we have much more work to do!

Support for the Rental Housing Trust Fund, in turn, will ultimately help Hawaii save money on programs aimed at helping the homeless, and will reduce the burden on charities and religious organizations. We do understand that many services are vying for funding at this critical time and we appreciate your ongoing support for the Rental Housing Trust Fund.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.