



Housing Hawai'i

Advocating Creating Maintaining Affordable Housing

February 12, 2014

Hearing: SB2540, SD1

Date: Thursday, February 13, 2014

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Room No. 221

Committee on Ways and Means

Senator David Ige, Chair

Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

COMMENTS

Chair Senator Ige and Vice Chair Senator Kidani, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means. Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments in support of SB2540, SD1 which will establish a rental deposit loan program to assist low income and homeless individuals and families in obtaining affordable rental housing.

I am Rene Berthiaume, V.P. of Network Enterprises, Inc. a non-profit agency that serves persons with disabilities, homeless veterans, etc. I am also V.P. of the Board of Directors of Housing Hawaii, non-profit agency that advocates and supports ways to assist low income families and homeless in obtaining affordable rental housing.

In serving our homeless veterans and training for and finding employment that enables them to afford to rent an apartment or a house, we became aware of that. One of the main barriers of moving in, is coming up with the first month's rent and security deposit. This program will go a long way in removing that barrier. The fact that it is a revolving fund would ensure that loans would be available to the next person or family in need.

The one suggestion I would make would be to remove Hawaii Housing Finance Development Corp. as the State agency administering this fund. I believe that the Dept. of Human Services, which contains the State Homeless Program, would be a more appropriate state agency.

Thank you for your consideration in passing SB2540 and feel free to contact me anytime for further information and input.

Sincerely,

Rene Berthiaume, V.P. Board of Directors, Housing Hawaii
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