

SB2544

Measure Title: RELATING TO THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM.

Report Title: Hawaii Public Housing Authority; Housing Choice Voucher Program

Description: Allows only original household members to retain a federal housing choice voucher. Requires vouchers to be returned to the Hawaii public housing authority when all original members are no longer in the household. Allows minors who survive the original head or co-head of the household and were added to the household to retain the voucher until the last of the minors reaches the age of twenty-one.

Companion:

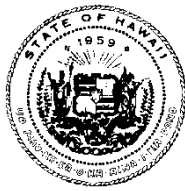
Package: Housing and Homeless Legislative Package

Current Referral: HMS, WAM

Introducer(s): CHUN OAKLAND, Dela Cruz, Galuteria, L. Thielen

SB2534

Measure Title: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.



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 HUMAN SERVICES

January 25, 2014 10:00 A.M.
Room 229, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of

Senate Bill 2544
Relating to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's Administration of the Federal Housing Choice Voucher Program

Honorable Chair Chun Oakland and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding Senate Bill (S.B.) 2544, relating to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's administration of the Federal 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

January 25, 2014

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The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Senate Committee on Human Services with the agency's position regarding S.B. 2544. We respectfully request the Committee to pass this measure favorably, and we thank you very much for your dedicated support.

TESTIMONY ON SB 2542 RELATING TO THE DISPOSITION OF THE CONVEYANCE TAX COLLECTIONS TO THE RENTAL HOUSING TRUST FUND, SB 2267 RELATING TO HOUSING, SB 2442 RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING, SB 2266 RELATING TO HOUSING, SB 2265 RELATING TO HOUSING, SB 2545 RELATING TO UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S SAVING ACCOUNTS, SB 2544 RELATING TO THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM, SB 2534 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS, SB 2337 RELATING TO LOW-INCOME HOUSING, SB 2395 RELATING TO HOMELESS, AND SB 2286 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

January 25, 2014

10:00 AM

Conference Rm. 229

Aloha Chair Chun Oakland, Vice-Chair Green, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, **my name is Stephen Morse. I am the Executive Director of Blueprint for Change (BFC) and am here today to support Senate Bills 2542, 2267, 2442, 2266, 2265, 2545, 2544, 2534, 2337, 2395, and 2286, all of which are part of the Housing and Homeless Legislative Package.**

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 community-based and are located in communities where families are at high risk of child abuse and neglect; and (2) they are the only programs 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.

We find that one of the biggest risk factors for child neglect in the families we serve is that they are homeless, homeless-at-risk, or living in unstable, overcrowded living conditions. In many cases, these families are also mired in other socioeconomic problems, such as unemployment and low incomes, substance abuse, and chronic health problems, but studies show that the key to helping these families break the cycle of poverty starts with providing them stable housing. Without stable housing, these families live transient lifestyles that make it hard for them to focus on problem-solving. It also makes it extremely difficult for prevention/diversion programs such as our Neighborhood Places to help provide the sustained, support services these families need to break the cycle, because they are always on the move.

If we are going to break the cycle and prevent the generational neglect of children within these families, we need to support housing programs and the development of low-income and affordable housing such as those proposed in the Senate Bills that are before this Committee today.

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