



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 2, 2016

TO: The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1587 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) has reservations about this proposed bill, and offers comments about its provisions and implementation.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish the Return to Home Program in DHS, and to appropriate an unspecified amount of funding for the program.

Participation by the homeless individual would be voluntary, and assistance provided would be limited to one time only. The implementation of the program would require coordination with the Judiciary and law enforcement if any pending legal matters exist regarding the individual, and would also require that the individual receive assistance in obtaining all documents necessary for travel.

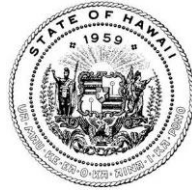
The overall goal of this proposed program appears to be to reunite homeless individuals with their friends and family members in their home community so that they receive support to end their homelessness. Providing the transportation costs to homeless individuals to return to their home state does not provide any guarantee that the individual will not return to Hawaii and become homeless again. There is potential that there would be those who would exploit this program's good intention by arriving in Hawaii with a one-way ticket, exhausting their financial

resources, and then becoming homeless with the expectation that they will be provided a one-way ticket funded by the State of Hawaii.

Return to Home programs already exist in our community through private donations, corporate contributions (such as from the visitor industry), and the charitable work being done by churches across the state. These programs have successfully reunited homeless individuals with family members eager to support them and to help them regain their stability. Many times these reunifications are possible because family members contribute financial resources toward transportation costs for their relative.

The DHS would require additional fiscal and human resources to administer such a program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 2, 2016

TO: The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **HB 1587 - RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 9:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness offers written comments in regards to HB1587, and defers to the Department of Human Services in regards to specific issues related to implementation of the proposed program, including cost implications generated by this proposal. While the Coordinator establishes and coordinates State policy to address homelessness, the Department of Human Services Homeless Programs Office is responsible for the administration and implementation of homeless programs.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to mandate that the Return-to-Home Pilot Program be established within the Department of Human Services. The bill also would appropriate an unspecified amount of funds to implement the program.

While a Return-to-Home program may assist some homeless individuals in reconnecting with family, an unintended consequence of this measure may be that other homeless individuals will perceive this program as an invitation to come to Hawaii and

receive homeless services here with an expectation that they will receive a “free” return trip. According to the 2014 Homeless Service Utilization Report, there were 1,767 individuals who received homeless services statewide that reported living in Hawaii for less than five years. There is concern that the number of homeless individuals arriving to Hawaii from out-of-state may inadvertently increase with the implementation of a government funded Return to Home program.

The Coordinator also notes that, while there are currently no similar programs that are government funded, privately funded Return-to-Home programs are already in existence and are administered by the business industry, social service agencies, churches, and community organizations. For example, the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) established a privately funded Return to Home program that offers this service on Oahu and the island of Maui. Because this service is currently available through the private sector, the establishment of a new government sponsored program may result in duplication of effort and inefficiencies in program implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.

Edward Thompson, III

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 7:50 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1587 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM*

HB1587

Submitted on: 1/27/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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Edward Thompson, III

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 1:43 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1587 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM*

HB1587

Submitted on: 1/27/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

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

Comments:

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kobayashi2-Jessi

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2016 11:12 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: mjgolo@email.phoenix.edu
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1587 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM

HB1587

Submitted on: 1/28/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: I support as long as it is not just used to try to get rid of homeless people. I understand that there are those who come here thinking they can enjoy the beauty of the islands without realizing it has a high cost of living. Once they know this, there is an understanding that, if they could, they would return to the mainland. They also need a sponsor at their destination.

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LATE

Aloha house committee members and guests. My name is Kimo Carvalho, Director of Community Relations for IHS, The Institute for Human Services.

I am here today to voice my strong support for HB1587.

Background:

Each year, IHS serves multiple homeless sub-populations – each requires different types of housing support options to end their homelessness.

For each client walking into any of our shelter facilities, or clients being served on the streets by our Outreach personnel – IHS conducts a thorough intake assessment to identify their needs, and designs a service path that results in housing placement to end and prevent their homeless situation.

Based on a set of questions we ask during our intake assessment related to recent arrivals, or individuals from out of state/country – two specific questions help us to identify candidates interested in returning home. And they are:

1. Would you like to return to the mainland?
2. If assistance were available to return to the mainland, would you be interested?

Indicating YES on this assessment allows our Housing program to follow up on the request. A more thorough assessment then allows us to indicate whether or not the client is serious about returning home. My submitted testimony (which you should have) provides you with a sample program questionnaire to show the types of questions we ask, but in summary we look for three main criteria:

1. Is there a verifiable and confirmed safety net plan on the receiving end so that we are not shifting homelessness across the country and demonstrating responsibility?
2. Does the client have some financial investment in ending their homelessness? Oftentimes this means the client will pay for at minimum half their airline ticket. This criterion has also shown to have filtered clients looking to take advantage of the program and wants to be homeless elsewhere, therefore being declined for assistance.
3. Is there any pending legal action within the State of Hawaii or Military?

Successful applicants are able to stay at facilities like Hale Mauiola or other shelter facilities until their departure date. IHS homeless outreach personnel makes sure clients has proper documentation, arrives on time, boards their plane, and follows up 3-months after departing Honolulu to ensure the client is not homeless.

If there is no proper documentation, IHS has a partnership agreement with TSA to provide homeless verification documents and proof of residency within other states to fast-track their relocation.

What Are IHS' Data/Results?:

In October 2014, the Hospitality Industry (as you all well know), through former HLTA CEO George Szgetti (who is now the HTA CEO) - stepped up with a two-year commitment to assist with funding support, and invested in homeless solutions specific to the Waikiki area, only. This included our homeless outreach program, a shuttle service, a new drop-in service center, and finally - \$30,000 specifically allocated toward airline relocation to assist at minimum 120 homeless persons out of state.

Within one year, IHS received 232 applicants from interested candidates. With our total operating revenue, expenditures showed we were able to assist 94 households (comprised of 133 individuals) with airline relocation assistance for a total expenditure of \$28,474.99 in airline ticket costs, only.

One important thing to note – IHS staff was careful with expenditures and worked hard to be efficient and frugal with limited funds. There are many clients whose family, friends or other supporters assisted with the full-ticket costs.

Expenditures of \$28,475 did not reflect our x1 FTE staff to vet each client, make the phone calls to arrange for logistics, confirm safety net resources, and negotiating and purchasing tickets.

Expenditures are also reflective of the total cost paid out by IHS after receiving the client's share of their airline ticket.

Regionalized destination data, by number of households, showed the following information:

Regionalized	KEY	# HH	% of HH
W	Western US	41	43.6%
S	Southern US	19	20.2%
MW	Mid-West US	11	11.7%
E	East Coast US	9	9.6%
M	Mountain US	4	4.3%
U	Unknown	4	4.3%
AK	Alaska	3	3.2%
NI	Neighbor Isle	1	1.1%
NE	North-East US	1	1.1%
OS	Overseas	1	1.1%
TOTAL	TOTAL	94	100.0%

Household/Persons served showed the following data breakdown:

HH Types	# HH	% of Total HH	# Persons in HH	% of Total Persons
Singles	73	77.7%	73	54.9%
Couples	9	9.6%	18	13.5%
Families	12	12.8%	42	31.6%
Total	94	100.0%	133	100.0%

Conclusion:

I'd like to end this testimony by mentioning that the 232 applicants, and 133 relocated out of state were from Waikiki, only. When launching the program in November 2014, we received interest from homeless throughout the entire State of Hawaii, including most the districts represented here on this committee today.

For the Waikiki Hospitality Industry, HLTA's new CEO, Mufi Hanneman, has committed to honor our second year of partnership this 2016 calendar year. IHS did receive a \$100,000 HLTA donation to fund part of the Waikiki Outreach program, including staff and our shuttle services. But there is no commitment to fund the entire program, including airline relocation assistance, until October 2016 during their planned fundraising event.

HLTA did commit \$25,000 to airline relocation, but specific to Maui County, only. And it is being executed by our Maui partner – Maui Family Life Center, to assist another 80 individuals this calendar year.

And just last month, a private donor awarded IHS another \$20,000 additional funds to assist whomever requested help this calendar year.

There is high demand for this program, for qualified people. As a service provider, it is a challenge to look a client in the eye to “no – there is no funding to support your housing assistance because you're not from Waikiki or Maui, and we don't have the funds donated to support your relocation.”

\$20,000 won't last us long.

We ask that you please consider this bill a necessary option for those who are stuck here in Hawaii, serious about relocating to their home where they are supported with a verified safety net plan that includes family, friends or service providers capable of helping us to end their homeless situation.

Mahalo,

Kimo Carvalho

Director of Community Relations

IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

LATE



46-063 Emepela Pl. #U101 Kaneohe, HI 96744 · (808) 679-7454 · Kris Coffield · Co-founder/Executive Director

TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 1587, RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

**House Committee on Human Services
Hon. Dee Morikawa, Chair
Hon. Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

Honorable Chair Morikawa and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing the IMU Alliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 local members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in support of HB 1587, relating to homelessness.

According to the latest point-in-time count, Hawai'i has 7,620 people living without housing, a 10 percent increase from the previous year. Our state's homeless population has reached its highest number in five years, boosted by a dramatic increase in the number of unsheltered houseless persons. Unsheltered persons now total 3,843 people, while sheltered individuals total 3,777. On O'ahu, in 2015, the houseless population rose to 4,903, up from 4,712 in 2014. The Big Island of Hawai'i totaled 1,241 houseless persons, up from 869 a year ago—a shocking 43 percent increase. Maui County saw its houseless population rise to 1,137, last year, up from 959 the previous year.

We do not believe that this bill represents a longterm, comprehensive solution to homelessness in Hawai'i. Moreover, we recognize that if passed, this bill must be coupled with additional reforms to be fully effectuated, such as increasing access to identification for houseless persons whose identification cards have been lost, stolen, or confiscated. It's worth nothing that the vast majority of our state's houseless population are not “snowbirds,” as they are sometimes pejoratively called, with a recent University of Hawai'i study showing that only about 6 percent of our state's homeless population moved to the islands within the last twelve months. That said, for those individuals who have relocated to Hawai'i, but become burdened by an unexpectedly exorbitant cost of living, this program could be beneficial in providing a safe return to a more sustainable home.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMU Alliance

kobayashi2-Jessi

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2016 9:43 AM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: gomama808@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1587 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM



HB1587

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

Testimony for HUS on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carolyn Golojuch	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Yes

Comments: Rainbow Family 808 as a humanitarian organization we wholeheartedly support this measure. Please in the memory of Senator Kahele. Pass HB1587 immediately.

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To: HUS testimony
Cc: starmer@hawaii.edu
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HB1587

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kaelan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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