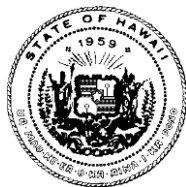


DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



RACHAEL WONG, DrPH  
DIRECTOR

PANKAJ BHANOT  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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 1724 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES**

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

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this proposed bill, however, we are concerned about possible duplication of existing services and cost implications.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funding for DHS to establish and operate a comprehensive support service center for disadvantaged individuals and families seeking transitional support services.

Currently DHS provides funding for homeless outreach of approximately \$2.2 million, and for homeless shelters in the total amount of \$13,378,650. Additional funding is provided to assist individuals and families with housing placement services and emergency needs to prevent homelessness (rent areas, utility assistance, etc.). The network of contracted statewide services, which provides services to needy individuals, currently has the capacity to provide the support described in the proposed bill. Services such as access to basic literacy skills, computer access, and job training programs are available through both government and private resources. When homeless individuals connect with homeless service providers, referrals and connections to other support services are made available to the client. Additionally, many of our homeless shelter

providers either have these resources on site, or regularly partner with community sources, to provide access to clients.

DHS appreciates the comprehensive nature of the services to which clients would have access, and notes that for individuals and families who are not homeless but remain economically or socially vulnerable, there may not be a centralized, one-stop location from which the services may be delivered.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Committee: Committee on Human Services  
Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, February 2, 2016, 9:00 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 329  
Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Support of H.B.1724, Relating to Human Services

Dear Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii (“ACLU of Hawaii”) writes in support of H.B. 1724, which appropriates moneys and establishes a comprehensive support service center for disadvantaged individuals and families seeking transitional support services.

In our experience working with (and representing) many homeless individuals and families, there are very real barriers that prevent those in need from receiving available services – including shelter, food, educational services (pursuant to the federal McKinney-Vento Act), and so on.

Many individuals and families simply do not know about available services, or have trouble accessing these services because of cultural barriers, linguistic barriers, or other poverty-related barriers (such as lack of a telephone or lack of transportation to visit multiple offices). This problem is very clearly exacerbated by the fact that, at present, services are diffused throughout an ill-connected patchwork of local government providers, state government providers, federal government providers, and non-profit/community providers. For example, if a homeless individual in the City and County of Honolulu wants to find shelter space, s/he must contact each individual shelter to see whether space exists on that day; often, that means contacting (or visiting in person) the shelter at a specific time of day to speak in person with a staff member to confirm whether space exists). Each shelter has its own entrance requirements, and many shelters are limited to specific groups, such as Veterans or domestic violence survivors, while other shelters have space for individuals but not families. Indeed, no one entity in Hawaii has comprehensive information on the availability of homeless shelter space at any given time, which presents a barrier for homeless individuals and families interested in seeking shelter.

Creating – and publicizing – a comprehensive center for homelessness-related services (such that an individual need only go to one office, or make one phone call, to receive help) is a clear, cost-effective, and productive way to help alleviate Hawaii’s homelessness crisis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii  
P.O. Box 3410  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96801  
T: 808.522-5900  
F: 808.522-5909  
E: [office@acluhawaii.org](mailto:office@acluhawaii.org)  
[www.acluhawaii.org](http://www.acluhawaii.org)

Chair Morikawa and Members of the Committee  
February 02, 2016  
Page 2 of 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mandy Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mandy Finlay  
Advocacy Coordinator  
ACLU of Hawaii

*The mission of the ACLU of Hawaii is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawaii fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawaii is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawaii has been serving Hawaii for 50 years.*

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uary95-954 Makakilo Dr. #71 Kapolei, HI 96707 Email: [Rainbowfamily808@gmail.com](mailto:Rainbowfamily808@gmail.com) Phone: 808-779-9078 Fax: 808672-6347

January 1, 2016

TO: HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

RE: HB1724 Transitional Housing

Appropriates moneys to establish and operate a comprehensive support service center for disadvantaged individuals and families seeking transitional support services.

Aloha Rep. Morikawa and members of the Human Services Committee,

Rainbow Family 808 wholeheartedly supports HB 1724 to appropriate funds for transitional housing for individuals and families.

We politely request that Homeless Youth be included in the individuals because they need transitional housing. Hawaii is one of the states that doesn't have any housing support for Homeless Youth. We need to put our Kokua into practice for the benefit our keiki.

HB1724 is a Humanitarian Measure that needs to become law immediately to help bring justice and humanity back to our state.

i

Mahalo nui loa,<sup>1</sup>

Carolyn Martinez Golojuch, MSW

President

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IF MORE PEOPLE BELIEVED IN JUSTICE, THE WORLD WOULD BE A BETTER PLACE!

Edward Thompson, III

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 7:51 PM  
To: HUS testimony  
Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB1724 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM\*

**HB1724**

Submitted on: 1/27/2016

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dylan Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Edward Thompson, III

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2016 1:44 PM  
To: HUS testimony  
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu  
Subject: \*Submitted testimony for HB1724 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM\*

**HB1724**

Submitted on: 1/27/2016

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Edward Thompson, III

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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
Sent: Tuesday, February 02, 2016 7:30 AM  
To: HUS testimony  
Cc: blau@hitechsupport.net  
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB1724 on Feb 2, 2016 09:00AM



**HB1724**

Submitted on: 2/2/2016

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Belinda Lau	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As a business owner and a resident of Hawaii, I am privileged to have the mental and physical health to enjoy life, make a living, and not have to struggle with finding a place to sleep or wondering when I will eat next. My children are safe in their beds each night. However, this is not enough. Knowing that there are families and individuals who don't have the safety and security that I have because they cannot access resources to provide for themselves should make it hard for all of us to sleep peacefully at night. Our business has had the opportunity to support David and Annabelle Stone with computer needs, donations, and volunteer our services to help their centers when needed. The help their learning centers provide for clients is truly making a difference in the lives of many. Families have actually been able to move into their own housing because they have been able to connect with employers and acquire new opportunities in the work force through the center. In this day and age, many job applications require email access and basic computer skills. Even submitting this testimonial required me to have an email address and basic typing skills. If there is a disparity between populations who live in transition, are homeless, or are economically disadvantaged, the technology gap is certainly one. This center partners with Worklinks by reaching out to communities that do not typically go to the American Job Centers for job search aid. In order to solve the homeless problem in Hawaii, we need more people reaching out to help those in need. Please pass this bill to support these important services to our community. I believe these learning centers are organically supported by grass roots efforts and private citizens who care. These services are truly making a difference, this is an opportunity for THIS legislative body to support the continuum of care needed to address the homelessness in Hawaii. Thank you reading my testimonial, I wish I was able to come in person. Aloha, Belinda Lau

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What is/are the most compassionate way/s to deal with our homeless?

We are given plenty of instruction (thank goodness) in disaster preparedness. We need to be intelligent, prepared and confident. This saves lives. Thank You!!

Yet, for the varied problems that confront us daily in our communities, we are left to flounder (when it comes to dealing with our homeless neighbors). We need information on protocols, appropriate responses and enlightened modes of support.

Many of our homeless (blatantly) do not follow (any) societal rules. We've depended on our police to monitor them (And, isn't that the impossible dream?). Our officers are neither mental health professionals, nor are they specially trained social workers. I have called with concerns and have been asked: "What do you want me to do about it?"

One of my dogs was brutally attacked (8/14) as I was walking my normal route on Kamehameha Highway in Kaneohe at 8:30 in the morning. The dogs "belonged to" a homeless woman in the area. Previously, she had them sequestered in a van. The van had been impounded because it had become an eyesore, as it were. Her dogs, known to many in the community because of their aggressiveness, were now lightly tethered and on the streets.

My small dog, Shorty, was euthanized soon after the attack. A lovely morning meander turned into a \$!,000 nightmare. I stroll with appropriate equipment now. How sad is that, Kaneohe?

This week, I chose to walk to the bank with my dogs. One of our homeless was sprawled across the bus stop bench (fronting Kaneohe Bakery) with his head dangling off the edge of the bench. He looked, shall I say, "expired." Upon my return, he had not moved. Thus, I proceeded to the police station, reported the issue, and was asked if I had checked his breathing. This is an individual with (at least) serious mental health issues. He has (playfully?) / (inappropriately) lunged at me and my dogs. He is sometimes vocal. Approaching him is a "no-no" as far as I am concerned. So, no, I did not check his breathing.

Several days later, the same individual used “his” shopping cart and his person to block the sidewalk. The dogs and I stepped into Kamehameha Highway to avoid him. This **dangerous maneuver** is getting more common as the homeless claim more of our common areas. **So many accidents just waiting to happen....**

We need open community forums and direct instruction related to appropriate responses when confronted with individuals who have mental health and/or drug related issues. **This should be a component of this bill. *We, the community, are the ones closest to these individuals, and we are given no guidance.***

Yes, we need mental health field workers. They will be roll-models and “go to people” when problems arise. They are the bridge-builders and the link that has been missing. Please reserve the preponderance of money that **will be allocated** to support those individuals who are willing to roll-up their sleeves and be a presence on the streets, etc. Administration gobbles too much, so please minimize and keep it simple (Another Impossible Dream??). Can we tap into related programs at the **various universities** to help create a well-rounded program for delivery of necessary services? This would be an incredible practicum for future practitioners. This would be logical and beneficial for all.

Again, we need to be intelligent, prepared and confident. This saves lives.

Mahalo

February 2, 2016

**LATE**

The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa  
Chair House Committee on Human Services  
HB 1724 – RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES  
Hearing: Tuesday, February 2, 2016; 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

Dear Chair Morikawa and the Members of the Committee on Human Services,

The I am writing in support of House Bill 1724 which will allow marginalized and transitioning individuals to access, with assistance, the opportunities and services that are being offered in our community.

I believe we have social programs in the community meant and designed to provide support for low income individuals with low literacy levels. However, **there is still a huge, gaping gap between these programs and the people that can use them.** This is the reason why a comprehensive center where people can learn at their pace and access services is needed. I am sure that attention to the homeless community is relevant, but there are also individuals and families that are at risk of being homeless or job less because they lack the skill to move up the employment ladders. There are people who do not have the skills to be promoted to better paying jobs because of digital illiteracy. Realistically, if we send those people now into a training such as a computer school they are most likely to be intimidated or would simply turn down the opportunity to learn.

Functional literacy is an issue since the Hawaii Literacy Needs Assessment findings in 1988. At that time, the workforce lacked skills to fill out job application forms or locate a telephone number in a phone book. In the same assessment, it was found that parents without skills are isolated from the activities of their children and fail to contribute fully, advocate, and support learning activities. That was years ago when the internet didn't exist. Back then, employers were clamoring for quality workers who are able to read and write, with problem solving skills. Workplace settings have already changed. Now, people need language skills, social skills, digital skills with at least a high school diploma to get a job, thrive and support their families.

This type of center is going to benefit our community-at-large because it will help even the field, promote functional literacy and the ability to participate in an evolving community. This is not just about solving homelessness. If we act on building employable and soft skills we are able to prevent further damage that poverty is creating in our State.

Thank you for your attention on this relevant issue.

Respectfully,

David Stone  
2730 Hipawai Place  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
808.469.7239