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**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB2087 on Feb 4, 2016 14:45PM\*  
**Date:** Thursday, February 04, 2016 6:45:33 AM

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**SB2087**

Submitted on: 2/4/2016

Testimony for HOU on Feb 4, 2016 14:45PM in Conference Room 225

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Heather Lusk	The CHOW Project	Support	No

Comments:

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# HAWAII APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Supporting SB 2087 Relating to Housing  
Senate Committee on Housing  
Scheduled for Hearing Thursday, February 4, 2016, 2:45 PM, Room 225

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*Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice Hawai'i Appleseed is committed to a more socially just Hawai'i, where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. We change systems that perpetuate inequality and injustice through policy development, advocacy, and coalition building.*

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Dear Chair Harimoto, Vice Chair Galuteria and Members, Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2087, which makes appropriations for three housing programs that will combat chronic homelessness.

Hawaii has the highest homelessness rate in the nation, and the problem continues to worsen. We need to adopt proven, cost-effective solutions to address homelessness. The Rental Housing Revolving Fund, Housing First, and Shallow Rent Subsidy programs proposed by SB 2087 are much needed.

Affordable housing is key to combating homelessness, and the Rental Housing Revolving Fund will provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate further initiatives against homelessness. The Rental Housing Trust Fund is a major tool for the creation of affordable housing and has a long record of success, funding over 5,000 units since its creation, and functions as an economic driver.

We support the continuance of the Housing First program on Oahu and its expansion to neighbor islands. The program gets people off the streets immediately, moving them into a more stable environment where they can be rehabilitated and achieve self-sufficiency. Housing first has been proven nationally as the most effective model for combating chronic homelessness.

The Shallow Rent Subsidy program proposed by SB 2087 is intended to help working households who do not need a deep subsidy to secure or maintain housing, but without some financial assistance (capped at \$500 per month) will become or remain homeless. Among homeless families, 50% of them are homeless because they were short money to pay rent and had no other underlying issues. Since the subsidy is shallow, a relatively small appropriation can help a relatively large number of households out of homelessness. Shallow Rent Subsidies are designed to be short term. Many studies indicate that participants often only required 6 months of subsidies before they were living in permanent, affordable housing. Shallow subsidies are a relatively low-cost, short-term intervention that can be a permanent solution to homelessness for many Hawai'i families—Hawai'i needs such a program.

Thank you very much for hearing and considering this important bill to help end homelessness.



Hawaii  
**Children's Action Network**  
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

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February 4, 2016

To: Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair  
Senator Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Housing

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director  
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **SB 2087, Relating to Housing - Support**  
**Hawaii State Capitol, Room 325 – February 4, 2016 – 2:45 PM**

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**On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in support of SB 2087, Relating to Housing.**

HCAN is committed to improving lives and being a strong voice advocating for Hawai'i's children. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2016 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2016policyagenda>.

HCAN supports SB2087, a comprehensive appropriation bill to provide funds for the Rental Housing Fund, Housing First, modernization of the state's stock of public housing units, and Rental Housing Assistance Program.

We need stable funding sources that address the chronic housing shortage and bridge the economic gap for families to afford safe and secure housing, especially those with young children. Without state investments, we could see our state continue to lead the nation in growing rates for homelessness and unsafe and unstable housing.

**Homeless Children:** Hawaii has the highest homeless rate in the nation. It's estimated that one-third of the homeless in Hawaii are children.

**Unstable Housing:** Many of our families may not be living on the street or the beach, yet they don't have permanent housing -- they stay with friends and family -- moving frequently.

**High cost of housing for families:** 60 percent of households with young children in Hawaii pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

According to a 2012 report published by Child Trends, children who experience a high degree of instability and turbulence in their lives are more likely to suffer higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems. Children who are homeless may suffer from hunger, poor physical and emotional health, and missed educational opportunities. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, children who are homeless are twice as likely to go hungry as are children who are not homeless. Homeless children are more likely than other children to have moderate to severe acute and chronic health problems, and less access to medical and dental care. Symptoms of asthma, hyperactivity/inattention, and behavior problem are more prevalent among this group. Homeless children have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, such as anxiety, depression, sleep problems, withdrawal and aggression. Children without stable homes are more than twice as likely as others to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of high school. A quarter or more of homeless children have witnessed violence.

We need better solutions and outcomes for our most vulnerable populations. Let's help our state build a comprehensive affordable housing solution that helps families at every stage to secure stable housing options that help families and keiki in our state build a pathway toward greater economic stability and a healthier thriving community.

**For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee vote to pass this bill.**