



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

April 01, 2016

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia J. Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

SUBJECT: SB 2570 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO THE RAPID RE-HOUSING ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

Hearing: Friday, April 01, 2016, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this measure, and respectfully suggests an amendment to include an appropriation for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

The Coordinator notes that Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) is one component of the State's larger strategy to address homelessness. The overall strategy focuses on best practice approaches that are appropriate to meet a homeless person's level of need, and moves households into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The strategy also includes use of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is used to collect client-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families. Better data collection will lead to overall system improvement with the ability to analyze performance measures, use of resources, provider accountability, and program implementation with fidelity.

While the Legislature has included funding for RRH and other key components of the State strategy (e.g. homeless outreach and Housing First) in various measures, the Coordinator notes there is no current vehicle to include funding for data analysis. The administration included a request for \$250,000 in the Executive Budget for HMIS training and data analysis, but this item was not funded in HB 1700 HD1. The Coordinator respectfully

requests that the Legislature include an appropriation for HMIS as part of the overall strategy to address and fund homeless efforts.

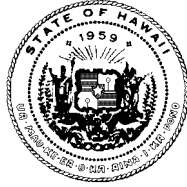
PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish a Rapid Re-Housing program to move homeless families and individuals into permanent housing as quickly as possible and achieve stability in that housing. The bill also requires the program to be designed and operated to qualify for federal emergency shelter grants, and appropriates general funds for fiscal year 2016-2017. In addition, this bill will expand the definition of “homeless” as applied to DHS’ homeless programs to include an individual or family who currently resides in permanent housing as participants in the rapid re-housing assistance program, and who were formerly homeless.

Rapid Re-Housing is an intervention designed to assist homeless individuals and families to quickly transition to permanent housing by providing a short-term housing subsidy. The Rapid Re-Housing program described in the Executive Budget differs from the one proposed by this bill in that the administration’s Rapid Re-Housing program will be specifically targeted at homeless individuals and families residing in shelter, and will be designed to accelerate the transition to permanent housing and reduce the length of stay in shelter. By more rapidly transitioning these households to permanent housing, the administration’s Rapid Re-Housing program would enable more vacancies to become available within the shelter system, thereby maximizing the use of existing shelter inventory to better meet the increased number of unsheltered households throughout the state. The \$2 million requested in the Executive Budget is estimated to serve up to 750 households statewide.

The Coordinator notes that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds a similar program labeled Rapid Re-Housing through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). However, the federal program establishes income limits at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for eligible households. The administration’s Rapid Re-Housing program would be designed to target households earning between 31-60% of the AMI in order to complement the existing federal program.

Finally, this measure aligns with Goal 2, Objective 4, Strategy 1 of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, which is to “support additional rental housing subsidies through federal, state, local and private resources.”

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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

March 31, 2016

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Rachael Wong, DrPH, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2570 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO THE RAPID RE-HOUSING ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

Hearing: Friday, April 1, 2016, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and appreciates the Legislature's support of Rapid Re-Housing as an evidence-based best practice to end homelessness. A request for \$2 million to establish a Rapid Re-Housing Program (RRH) was part of the Governor's Executive Budget, however it was not funded in the HB1700 HD1.

PURPOSE: The measure requires DHS to establish a rapid re-housing assistance program to move homeless families and individuals into permanent housing as quickly as possible and achieve stability in that housing; requires the program to be designed and operated to qualify for federal emergency shelter grants; expands the definition of "homeless" as applied to the Department's homeless programs; and appropriates general funds for fiscal year 2016-17.

If funded and implemented, the RRH will be specifically geared to operate in close coordination with homeless shelters to identify individuals and families who are capable of maintaining stable, permanent housing; work assertively with them to mitigate concerns (e.g. budgeting, debt management, employment, etc.); and efficiently move them into housing that is sustainable. Case management and housing placement services will be key factors in the RRH program.

By creating the program as part of the existing shelter program, the Department could then support the overall systemic goals of reducing the length of stay in shelters and housing the homeless more efficiently. This approach will also create a "flow" into the shelter system so that the unsheltered homeless individuals and families who need and want shelter are never turned away due to a lack of space. This strategy will make more efficient use of existing shelter inventory and achieve long term positive outcomes in housing placement and stability.

The Department's Homeless Programs Office (HPO) is the collaborative applicant on behalf of the neighbor islands' Continuum of Care (CoC) known as Bridging the Gap (BTG). As such, DHS administers the HUD-funded Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) for BTG. The City and County of Honolulu administers ESG for the island of Oahu and on behalf of Partners in Care, the Oahu CoC. Absent a change in the CoC's designation, DHS is not eligible to apply for or administer ESG funds for Oahu. Therefore it is highly unlikely that DHS will be able to use ESG funds to offset the cost of this program. Moreover, current ESG regulations set income limits for recipients at 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). At that level, it is challenging to prove an individual/family's sustainability. DHS expects our RRH program will create eligibility standards at or around 31-60% of AMI. In this way, those who qualify for ESG can be served through federal assistance, and those who make slightly more income but still need help, may also receive case management and short to medium term rental assistance through the State RRH program.

Also included in the Executive Budget, but not funded in HB1700 HD1, was the request for \$250,000 for improvements of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Investing in the data collection system used by the providers of the Continua of Care (CoC) will improve the ability to evaluate performance and better measure impacts of our communities' efforts to address homelessness. While the Department prefers the item be included in the Executive Budget, we asked that appropriation be included in the legislature's overall strategy to address and fund homeless efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

COMMENTS on SB 2570 SD2 HD1: RELATING TO THE RAPID RE-HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, Representative Scott Y Nishimoto, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Finance

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Monday, 3/14/16; 9:00 AM; CR 329

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written Comments re: **SB 2570, SD2, HD1** which would require DHS to establish a rapid re-housing program to move homeless families or individuals into permanent housing as soon as possible and achieve stability in that housing. I am Betty Lou Larson representing Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 60 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, developmentally disabled, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. This bill fits into our priority to address affordable housing and homelessness, especially among families.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports the intent of this bill since it could put added focus on best practices to move families into permanent housing as soon as possible. DHS currently has short term rapid rehousing programs, such as the Housing Placement Program operated by Catholic Charities Hawai'i. The missing piece is medium term rental assistance, such as requested in the Governor's budget (\$2 million for rapid-rehousing) as well as in bills on this issue which will be considered by the House. We support the Governor's budget since this funding would move families out of shelters more rapidly into permanent housing. This would better utilize shelter space. Financial stabilization/case management services would also be provided to ensure a family's long term stability in housing.

Among homeless families, 50% of them are homeless because they were short of money to pay rent and had no other underlying issues. Rapid rehousing can help a large number of households get out of homelessness. We support an ongoing Rapid Rehousing commitment at DHS, however this program must be flexible to meet the needs of a variety of homeless situations. Requiring the program to be designed and operated to qualify for federal emergency shelter grants, would limit it to serve families at 30% AMI or below. Working families who can best utilize rapid rehousing funds for a limited time until they are back on their feet, may have incomes over 30% AMI. Flexibility is needed to complement the current ESG program but also reach a broader target population. We urge you to provide flexibility to allow DHS to implement an effective program for rapid rehousing.





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

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April 1, 2016

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

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

Re: **SB 2570, SD2, HD1, Relating to the Rapid Re-Housing Assistance Program -
SUPPORT**
Agenda #3 – Hawaii State Capitol, Room 308 – April 1, 2016, 3 PM

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in support of SB 2570, SD2, HD1, Relating to the Rapid Re-housing Assistance Program.

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 this initiative to provide authorization and appropriations for critical programs serving Hawai'i's most at risk families for temporary rental (Rapid Re-housing) subsidies for working families.

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: Hawai'i has the highest homeless rate in the nation. It's estimated that one-third of the homeless in Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

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 appropriate funds and vote to pass this bill.



From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, April 01, 2016 4:24 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: rebezamo@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB2570 on Apr 1, 2016 15:00PM*

SB2570

Submitted on: 4/1/2016

Testimony for FIN on Apr 1, 2016 15:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rebeca Zamora	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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