

# COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

## TESTIFIER SIGN-UP SHEET

If you did not submit written testimony *at least 24 hours* before today's hearing and would like to testify, please sign-up on this sheet. Testifiers will be taken in the order signed in.

BILL NO: SB 902

NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION (SUPPORT/OPOSE)
	Phocused	S
Shana Morimoto	Katakato United	S



PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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TO: Senator Suzanne Chun-Oakland, Chair  
Senator Josh Green, Vice-Chair  
Members, Committee on Human Services

FROM: Scott Morishige, Executive Director, PHOCUSED

HEARING: Senate Committee on Human Services  
**Saturday, January 31, 2015 at 1:15 p.m. in Conference Room 229**

**Submitting Comments re SB902, Relating to Taxation**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in regards to SB902, Relating to Taxation. PHOCUSED is a nonprofit membership and advocacy organization that works together with community stakeholders to impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our community, such as the homeless. Our testimony is limited to support for the section of this bill that would amend the income tax credit for low-income household renters, as well as the refundable food/excise tax credit.

Hawaii has the highest cost of living in the nation – at almost 160% of the national average. Hawaii residents pay more for shelter than any other state in the nation, with 73% of those living in poverty paying more than half of their income on housing. Many of these severely cost burdened renter households are headed by people who are elderly or disabled – representing some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

While the median cost of rent in Hawaii has increased by 45% between 2005 to 2012, the low-income household renters credit has not been adjusted since the early 1980s. This bill will increase the value of the credit for the first time since 1981, and increase the income threshold for the first time since 1989. Revisions to the refundable food/excise tax credit would also provide a financial boost for low-income households. PHOCUSED sees the proposed adjustments to the low-income household renters credit and the refundable food/excise tax credit as a step in the right direction that will provide greater financial relief for low-income households throughout Hawaii.

Once again, PHOCUSED comments only on the portion of this bill that would amend the income tax credit for low-income renters, as well as the refundable food/excise tax credit. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact PHOCUSED at 521-7462 or by e-mail at [admin@phocused-hawaii.org](mailto:admin@phocused-hawaii.org).