



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

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GOVERNOR

April 3, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: HB 1098 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESS SHELTERS

Hearing: Monday, April 3, 2017, 1:35 p.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this Administration bill. The Coordinator notes, this bill addresses concerns raised by homeless service providers that the requirement in Act 234, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2016, for partitioned sleeping areas in homeless shelters may result in a reduction of emergency shelter bed spaces.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to amend provisions of Act 234, SLH 2016, to provide emergency shelters with the flexibility to provide partitioned sleeping spaces for homeless persons or families based upon guidelines determined by the Department of Human Services (DHS). The bill also delays the effective date of Act 234, SLH 2016, except for section 6(c) that took effect July 1, 2016.

Act 234, SLH 2016, established minimum requirements for every homeless emergency shelter operated by a provider agency that is under contract with DHS. In an attempt to make the system of homeless shelters more cost effective and more appealing to families and individuals, the Act directed that payments be conditioned on performance measures and established audit provisions.

The Coordinator notes that providing the option to implement partitions will provide needed flexibility to emergency shelter providers. Without this flexibility, the

requirement to mandate partitioned space may have the unintended consequence of adversely impacting bed space at certain shelters, especially those located on the neighbor islands. Emergency shelter bed space is especially limited on the neighbor islands, which have seen the largest percentage increase in unsheltered homeless persons according to the 2016 statewide homeless point in time count.

The amendment to provide flexibility in regard to partitioned bed space will also impact bed spaces for shelters partially funded by other departments, such as the Department of Health (DOH). For example, mental health group homes are sometimes funded as emergency shelters by both DOH and DHS. If partitioned spaces are mandated, rather than optional, this may adversely impact limited bed space in some mental health group homes.

The Coordinator further notes that additional time is needed for DHS to obtain feedback from homeless service providers prior to the formal adoption of administrative rules to implement new shelter standards required by Act 234, SLH 2016.

The Administration's proposed amendments to Act 234 are part of a comprehensive framework to address homelessness, which seeks to transition homeless individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The framework includes a focus on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. All three of these leverage points must be addressed to continue forward momentum in addressing the complex issue of homelessness.

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

April 3, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB1098 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESS SHELTER**

Hearing: Monday, April 3, 2017, 1:35 p.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this administration bill to address shelter requirements. This measure addresses concerns raised by homeless service providers that the requirement of Act 234, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2016, for partitioned sleeping areas in homeless shelters is resulting in a reduction of emergency shelter bed spaces. DHS appreciates the amendments of the Senate Committees on Housing and Human Services:

- (1) Clarifying that the delay of the effective date of Act 234, Session Laws of Hawaii 2016, to July 1, 2018, does not apply to subsection (c) of section 6 of Act 234, which requires the Department of Human Services to work with provider agencies to implement Act 234 and took effect on July 1, 2016;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2017; and
- (3) Other technical amendments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure will allow DHS the flexibility to determine the appropriate standard for partitioned space, based upon guidelines established by DHS, and ensure that shelter beds are not lost to the requirements of Act 234, Session Laws of

Hawaii 2016. In addition, the measure extends the effective date to give DHS time to implement Act 234, SLH 2016.

Act 234, SLH 2016, established minimum standards for every homeless shelter to make shelters more amenable to homeless clients. Act 234, SLH 2016, also required that payments be based off of performance measures and audit requirements to ensure that the State is receiving the most value and the best services.

Giving DHS discretion and the flexibility to determine which shelters will or will not have partitions may prevent the unintended consequence of reducing the amount of bed space available to homeless people.

The extension of the effective date of Act 234, SLH 2016, will provide DHS with more time to respond to feedback from affected service providers, and draft administrative rules on new shelter standards that will benefit homeless individuals and families, service providers, and the State.

The Administration's proposed amendments to Act 234, SLH 2016, are part of a comprehensive framework to address homelessness, which seeks to transition homeless individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The framework includes a focus on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. All three of these leverage points must be addressed to continue forward momentum in addressing the complex issue of homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1098 HD2, SD1: RELATING TO HOMELESS SHELTERS

TO: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair; Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair; and Members, Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Terrence L. Walsh, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer

Hearing: Monday, 4/3/17; 1:35 PM; CR 211

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support** of HB 1098 HD1, SD1 which provides that emergency shelters may have partitioned space for homeless persons/families based on guidelines from the Department of Human Services. It further extends the emergency and transitional shelter compliance requirements for Act 234 for contracts with DHS for one year. I am Terry Walsh, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners in Care.

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. Ending homelessness is a top priority for 2017.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i strongly believes in the dignity of the individual. We understand the intent of Act 234 to set standards for emergency and transitional shelters. However, this has led to unintended consequences. We support this bill since it addresses some of these unintended consequences as well as giving time for the Department of Human Services to get feedback from homeless service providers before the Department creates and adopts administrative rules to implement the new shelter standards set forth in Act 234, SLH 2016.

The issue of mandating partitions for all emergency shelters has been particularly troublesome. This bill would provide the option to install partitions and give needed flexibility to the many various types of emergency shelters. Without this flexibility, shelters may be adversely impacted and lose bed spaces. Neighbor Island shelter space is especially limited, having seen the largest percentage increase in unsheltered homeless per the 2016 statewide Point in Time Count.

We know we have a crisis. We know we are #1 rate in the nation for homelessness per capita. We need to give shelters flexibility to serve the homeless.

We urge you to support this bill to work towards our goal of ending homelessness in Hawaii. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at 373-0356, or at bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org, if you have any questions.

