

todd2 - Chloe

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 3:33 AM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: blawaiianlvr@icloud.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1494 on Feb 10, 2017 09:30AM*

HB1494

Submitted on: 2/9/2017

Testimony for HUS on Feb 10, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
De MONT R. D. CONNER	Ho'omana Pono, LLC.	Support	Yes

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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todd2 - Chloe

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 6, 2017 3:51 PM
To: HUS testimony
Cc: mendezj@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for HB1494 on Feb 10, 2017 09:30AM*

HB1494

Submitted on: 2/6/2017

Testimony for HUS on Feb 10, 2017 09:30AM in Conference Room 329

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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LATE

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
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DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 10, 2017

TO: The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

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

SUBJECT: HB 1494 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Friday, February 10, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure, as it seeks to address the complex challenge of chronic homelessness, and provides the following comments. The Coordinator is concerned about the cost implications generated by this proposal, and asks for support of the Governor's Executive Budget request that includes \$3 million to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for a statewide Housing First program.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish a Homeless Incentive Program to encourage chronically homeless individuals to get off the streets by using the services of shelters. The bill requires DHS to pay chronically homeless individuals \$12 per person for each overnight stay in a shelter, provided that the shelter has sufficient space and the individual is in compliance with shelter rules and requirements. In addition, requires DHS to establish administrative rules for the Homeless Incentive Program, and appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds to implement the program.

Providing an incentive for each overnight stay in a shelter may provide a disincentive for chronically homeless individuals to engage in programs that could transition them out of shelter and into permanent housing. As a result, the incentive may have the unintended consequence of lengthening a chronically homeless individual's stay

in shelter, and inadvertently lengthening the time a chronically homeless individual remains homeless. As currently drafted, the bill does not establish a maximum length of time that a chronically homeless individual may receive the \$12 financial incentive for shelter stay.

In addition, there is concern that additional income from shelter incentives may adversely impact chronically homeless individuals who receive need-based public benefits. If the shelter incentive is counted as additional income, the payment of the incentive may result in the unintended consequence of the chronically homeless individual being over-income and no longer eligible to receive public assistance.

The Coordinator notes that the State has adopted a comprehensive framework to address homelessness, which includes a focus on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. This framework includes specific programs to address the needs of the chronically homeless population, including homeless outreach, mental health and substance use treatment, and the Housing First program.

The Housing First program specifically serves chronically homeless individuals, and provides both housing and supportive services. Housing First is an evidence-based intervention, which has demonstrated much success in other communities across the country. Locally, the state's Housing First program currently provides permanent housing for 117 chronically homeless persons, including many individuals with serious and persistent mental illness and chronic health conditions. Homeless individuals are identified by homeless service providers, and are referred to the Housing First program based on their level of need. The most recent DHS report on the status of the state Housing First program can be found on the DHS website at:

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Section-346-378-Housing-First.pdf>

The Coordinator notes that the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §346-378(e) currently defines “chronically homeless individual” as a homeless individuals who has an addiction or mental illness, or both. If this bill moves forward, the Coordinator requests

that the definition be amended to conform to the definition of “chronically homeless” provided in this bill, which is consistent with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT
DIRECTOR

BRIDGET HOLTHUS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

LATE

February 10, 2017

TO: The Honorable Representative Dee Morikawa, Chair
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB1494 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: February 10, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully opposes this bill, as drafted. While this bill is well intended to encourage individuals to use the shelter system, in addition to the cost implications, DHS is concerned that that a straight per night cash stipend may have unintended consequences such enabling drug and alcohol use, cycling in and out of shelters to obtain the stipend, and it may be a disincentive to participating in services toward permanent housing.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require DHS to create a homeless incentive program that will provide a \$12 stipend to incentivize homeless off the street and into shelter.

The best strategy to end homelessness is to link individuals and families to housing. Shelters, emergency and transitional, are intended to be a short term step into permanent housing. The true incentive should be permanent housing with supportive services, when necessary, to maintain housing.

DHS has been working hard to change the homeless service delivery model into a Housing First model. Housing First, is evidence based and has been successfully implemented on O'ahu, and DHS is expanding the program to neighbor islands. Housing First is guided by the overarching principle that people need basic necessities like a safe, permanent place to live and

food, before addressing mental health or substance use issues, attending to health care, and employment.

Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their well-being. This bill does not align with Housing First by incentivizing shelter stays with cash.

Other communities have tried a variety of cash incentives in the past, without much evidence that healthy behaviors follow. However, there are other incentives such as linking individuals to cell phones that are part of the outreach efforts in many communities; low cost cell phones are available through the Lifeline program of the Federal Communications Commission. Here is a link to our State's program:

<http://cca.hawaii.gov/dca/telecommunications/lifeline/>. Recent modification to the Lifeline program in 2016 included broadband support.

Lastly, the bill introduces another definition of "chronic homeless." Section 346-378 (e) defines, for Housing First programs, "'chronically homeless individual' means a homeless individual who has an addiction or a mental illness, or both." To maximize federal resources, the State has aligned its programs and definitions to match the definition used by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which includes other disabilities. The HUD definition is a person must have a disability and have been living in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or a safe haven for the last 12 months continuously or on at least four occasions in the last three years where those occasions cumulatively total at least 12 months. Programs that do not conform to the HUD definition of chronic homeless, jeopardize federal funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.