



LATE TESTIMONY

**EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU**

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

March 30, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor

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

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

SUBJECT: HB 83 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Thursday, March 30, 2017, 9:50 a.m.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this bill, has concerns, and offers the following comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), in conjunction with an advisement of the Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), to establish a working group to examine and develop recommendations related to the establishment of safe zones for persons experiencing homelessness. The bill also requires the working group to submit a report of the Legislature, and appropriates an unspecified level of funding to support the working group.

The Coordinator notes that the HICH has previously studied the issue of homeless encampments. In 2012, the Legislature directed the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) to study the issue of "designating safe facilities located at areas, showers, toilets, laundry facilities, and locker rooms in various locations throughout the State for homeless persons for overnight stays." In its report to the Legislature, the HICH concluded that "[c]reating camping areas for homeless individuals in our parks and in our public buildings . . . is unworkable, is not advisable, and should not be pursued." See Report to the Twenty-Seventh

Hawaii State Legislature 2013, in accordance with the provisions of Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012, Appendix 2, at page 10; link to the report: <http://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/2012-Act-105-SLH-2012-HICH-Progress-Report.pdf>).

In addition, on a national level, the issue of formalized homeless encampments has been examined by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). According to the USICH, “strategies that focus on making encampments an official part of the system for responding to homelessness can serve to distract communities from focusing on what is most important – connecting people experiencing homelessness to safe, stable, permanent housing.” (USICH, *Ending Homelessness for People Living in Encampments*, August 2015).

The Coordinator notes that the State has worked, in partnership with the City & County of Honolulu, to utilize modular structures on government-owned properties to provide housing specifically designated for homeless individuals and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

LATE TESTIMONY

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
To: [JDLTestimony](#)
Cc:
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB83 on Mar 30, 2017 09:50AM
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2017 9:46:32 PM

HB83

Submitted on: 3/29/2017

Testimony for JDL/WAM on Mar 30, 2017 09:50AM in Conference Room 211

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Aashish Hemrajani	Individual	Support	No

Comments: The proposed measure would only work if used in conjunction with policies that build trust with service providers. Safe zones must not be used in conjunction with measures that criminalize homelessness. I applaud your attention to this issue, and urge you to be courageous in reversing the current course of criminalization that is ineffective, expensive, and immoral. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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LATE TESTIMONY

HB 83, HB1, SD1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS
Committee on Judiciary and Labor, Committee on Ways and Means
Decision Making- Thursday, March 30, 2017
9:50 am, State Capitol, Conference Room 211

By
Cedric Gates, Henry Aquino, Tom Brower, Mark Hashem
Dee Morikawa, Sean Quinlan, Joy San Buenaventura

Aloha e,

My name is Justin Ha'aeo Pagan, a graduate student at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. My stance on the following bill does not reflect the opinion of the University, as I am writing to testify on my behalf as an individual. I am writing in support of HB 83, HB 1, SD 2, which requires the Hawaii interagency council on homelessness, in conjunction with and advisement of the department of human services and department of land and natural resources, to establish a working group to examine and develop recommendations related to the establishment of safe zones for persons experiencing homelessness. Homelessness continues to be a prevalent issue here in the islands and has yet to be addressed in a manner that has effectively eased this problem.

The states way of dealing with the issue of homelessness has been a topic of discussion, as the state prohibits homeless individuals from sitting or lying in certain districts, yet worse, criminalize these individuals for doing so. It is difficult to understand how the state not only potentially violates the Constitutional Rights of homeless individuals, but cares more for the beautification of areas that attract tourists, which are some of the districts that prohibit homeless from residing. It is understandable that this is also considered a safety hazard to homeless and patrons, however, I feel that there is an alternative way to addressing the issue.

Identifying safe zones for this population will definitely provide a Segway into getting homeless out of dangerous areas, with the end goal of getting them off the streets and into permanent or transitional housing. Designating a working group to finding such areas will prevent homeless persons from putting themselves in danger. Since the bills prohibiting homeless from convening in certain districts, I have seen a number of homeless in areas that are hazardous. For example, a number of homeless encampments rest on a ridge where the Pali exit merges onto the H1, which has also been highlighted on the news.

Such a group of individuals will allow for safer residents for the homeless population, but more importantly, trying to find adequate housing. I humbly ask that law makers will think long and hard when determining whether or not this bill should be passed and set into law. Now is the time to address the issue of homelessness head on with the right intentions of getting individuals off the streets and into homes. I respect all that this committee and law makers do and ask that this bill be passed as I fully support HB 83, HB 1, SD 2.

Me ke aloha pumehana

Justin Ha'aeo Pagan