



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

March 1, 2017

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

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

SUBJECT: **HB 83 HD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness respectfully opposes this bill, as it appears that it will result in the formal establishment of homeless encampments on state lands. The formal establishment of homeless encampments is inconsistent with the State's overall strategy to address homelessness.

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>). The better long term strategy is to link people to housing.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to allow the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish Pu'uhoonua Safe Zones where homeless persons may reside. The bill also appropriates an unspecified amount of funds to DHS for implementation.

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. While all three of these leverage points must be addressed to continue forward momentum in addressing the complex issue of homelessness, the overall strategy emphasizes permanent housing as the solution to homelessness.

While the bill does not provide a clear definition for a “Pu’uhonua Safe Zone,” it appears that these zones may be intended to establish formal homeless encampments on state lands. The establishment of formal homeless encampments is inconsistent with the State’s overall strategy to address this complex issue. Both the HICH and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) have recommended against formal establishment of homeless encampments. 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).

Linking people to housing and supporting their ability to maintain housing are better alternatives to the establishment of tent encampments; the Executive Budget request includes over \$180 million for the development of affordable housing and for public housing renovations, and additional appropriations for Housing First and mental health services. The Executive Budget specifically addresses housing production and assistance with high housing costs, as well as increasing resources for homeless outreach, mental health and substance use treatment.

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 1, 2017

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

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB83 HD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully opposes this measure. DHS is concerned that this measure will create formal homeless encampments on State land. The better strategy is to place individuals and families into housing.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to require DHS to create Pu`uhonua Safe Zones for homeless people to reside. The bill also appropriates an unspecified amount of money to establish the Pu`uhonua Safe Zones. The Committee on Human Services amended the measure by:

- (1) Giving DHS and not the Governor, the authority to establish pu'uhonua safe zones;
- (2) Deleting the provision requiring the Land Use Commission to designate pu'uhonua safe zones;
- (3) Providing that the State shall not be liable for any loss, damage, injury, or death arising from or occurring in a pu'uhonua safe zone;
- (4) Making DHS the expending agency for the appropriation;
- (5) Changing its effective date to July 1, 2075, to facilitate further discussion; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for clarity, consistency, and style.

The best strategy to end homelessness is to find people safe and affordable housing. Placing homeless individuals into permanent housing through programs like Housing First is evidence-based and best practice. Housing First is an approach that emphasizes stable, permanent housing as a strategy for ending homelessness. Additionally, as noted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, 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 life. Safe zones, encampments, or tent cities created by measures such as Pu`honua Safe Zones, takes away that choice, which is the critical component of Housing First.

Many experts on the issue of homelessness agree that these types of encampments encourage more encampments. It is important for government to build affordable low income housing to increase the inventory of permanent housing instead of promoting temporary camps. Barbara Poppe, former Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), has stated that tent cities are not part, or should not be part of the government's response to homelessness.

Linking people to housing and supporting their ability to maintain housing with supportive services are better alternatives than the establishment of safe zones, encampments, or tent cities. DHS asks that the Legislature support the Governor's Executive budget requests that are grounded in available data, to continue to fund and expand Housing First, support mental health services, repair public housing units, and develop affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, March 1, 2017
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 83, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

House Bill 83, House Draft 1 proposes to create pu‘uhonua safe zones where the homeless may reside in the State. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Governor’s Office on Homelessness with regard to the feasibility of such programs and offers the following comments.

The Department notes there is no process for DHS to choose parcels for the establishment of pu‘uhonua. The Department would like to be consulted and have the Board of Land and Natural Resources approve an executive order to transfer the lands to DHS if lands under its jurisdiction are considered for the purposes of this bill.

While this bill is silent as to specific sites for pu‘uhonua, the Department notes that Senate Bill 1243 specifically identifies Sand Island Beach Park, O‘ahu, as a possible safe zone. The Department has provided comments to the Senate Committee on Human Services as to drawbacks with using Sand Island as a homeless site. Further, the Department was also informed that its Division of Aquatic Resources property next to the Wai‘anae Small Boat Harbor, O‘ahu, is being advocated as a pu‘uhonua. The Department notes that this property was set aside for the conservation of rare opae ‘ula (native red shrimp) and the anchialine ponds in which they reside.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

KEKOA KALUHIWA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS



February 28, 2017

TIM VANDEVEER
Chair

MARGARET WILLE
SEAN SMITH
Legislative Affairs Committee Co-Chairs

**SUPPORT FOR HB83 HD1
“RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS”**

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, March 1, 2017 1:00 pm State Capitol, Conference Room 308

Submitted on Behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports HB83 HD1 “Relating to Homelessness”, which would allow the Department of Human Services to establish puuhonua safe zones where homeless persons may reside, and appropriates funds for establishing the zones. **Legislation, such as HB83 HD1, to address homelessness is one of DPH’s legislative priorities for this 2017 Legislative Session.**

Mahalo in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Tim Vandever
Chair of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

/s/ Margaret Wille
/s/ Sean Smith
Legislative Affairs Committee Co-chairs

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 27, 2017 4:18 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: blawaiianlvr@icloud.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB83 on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM

HB83

Submitted on: 2/27/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

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

Comments: We continue to STRONGLY SUPPORT this bill.

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HB83

Submitted on: 2/28/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kim Soito	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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HB83

Submitted on: 2/28/2017

Testimony for FIN on Mar 1, 2017 13:00PM in Conference Room 308

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Golojuch	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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