



THE SENATE
THE TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2017

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND
TECHNOLOGY
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Josh Green, Chair

2/10/2017
Rm. 414, 1:20 PM

SB 1085
Relating to Homelessness

Chair Wakai, Chair Green and Members of both Committee, my name is Max Sword, here on behalf of Outrigger Hotels & Resorts in support to SB 1085.

We support housing for the homeless and we believe it is not only a tourism issue, but a community issue as a whole. Any funds for housing the homeless, should therefore come out of the portion of the Transient Accommodations Tax that is deposited into the general fund, without reducing the portion allocated to visitor industry marketing through the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Convention Center.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.



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Testimony of

Mufi Hannemann
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Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

Senate Committees on
Economic Development, Tourism, and Technology
Human Services

Senate Bill 1085, Relating to Homelessness

Chair Wakai, Chair Green, and Committee Members:

We offer this testimony on behalf of the more than 700 members of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association. Finding solutions to homelessness is one of the HLTA's top legislative priorities this year and we strongly support Senate Bill 1085, which would appropriate \$2 million in Transient Accommodations Tax revenue for services for this population.

While the homeless can be found across our state, the situation is particularly acute in Waikiki and at popular public parks and facilities used by residents and visitors alike. Homelessness has a direct impact on the visitor experience, is a source of frustration for local residents, and poses a very difficult and often dangerous existence for the homeless.

As noted in Senate Bill 1085's preamble, the hospitality industry, through our association and member hotels and businesses, has donated \$2 million during the last three years to the Institute for Human Services (IHS) and other social service agencies on our largest islands, specifically for homelessness outreach and service. These funds have come from a collaborative effort put forth by the hospitality industry which include monies from our charity walks on Oahu, Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, and Maui as well as funds raised from the Hilton Hawaiian Village's Hawai'i for Hawai'i Benefit Concert. Agencies and charitable non-profits that have had direct impact from these donations include Helping Hands Hawai'i, Honolulu Community Action Program, Waikiki Health, Catholic Charities Hawai'i, and Mental Health Kokua. Specifically speaking, we have developed a very productive partnership with the IHS, which helps the homeless in Waikiki, including outreach efforts, repatriation and van transportation so they can access vital services. As a result of our firm belief that homelessness is not just a Honolulu-centric challenge, we also gave Kaua'i Economic Opportunity \$25,000 last year and Maui Family Life Center the year before to repatriate homeless back to their families or caregivers on the mainland. Our plans this year is to provide a similar donation for Hawai'i Island to an appropriate service provider.



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But despite the best efforts of the hospitality industry and the tremendous fund-raising success of the Charity Walk, the needs of this growing population continue to outweigh the resources. This Senate proposal would appropriate funds from TAT revenue to address homelessness in the state. However, insofar as the funds will be from TAT revenue, we suggest that Paragraph 6 be amended to specify that the \$2 million to be allocated to provider agencies be directed at those agencies servicing tourism-impacted areas throughout the state. Only with a statement conveying the Legislature's intent can we be assured that tourism-generated funding will be directed at such districts.

The members of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association will continue to fund-raise and donate money through our Visitor Industry Charity Walk and other endeavors to help the homeless. We look forward to having the state government, through this legislation, augment our efforts as a direct participant in what should be an important public-private partnership.

Mahalo.