



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

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February 6, 2017

TO: The Honorable Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

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

SUBJECT: SB 1243 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Monday, February 6, 2017, 3:05 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness respectfully opposes this bill. The Coordinator notes that the formal establishment of homeless encampments is inconsistent with the State's overall strategy to address homelessness; linking individuals and families to housing is the better long term strategy.

In 2012, through Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012, the Legislature requested the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) 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>).

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to direct the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop and implement residential campgrounds for the homeless. The bill appropriates \$1 million in general funds for staffing and 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.

The establishment of formal homeless encampments conflicts with both federal and state policies to address homelessness. 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).

As an alternative 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. 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.

HAWAII KAI HOMELESS TASK FORCE

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TESTIMONY

(1) SB1243 Park & Sleep Residential Campgrounds: —Nominal cost to the State. (Companion bill to HB1447) Introduced by Sen. Josh Green

INTRODUCTION

I'm Mike Goodman, Director of the Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force. I want to thank the Chair, Vice-Chair, and all members of this committee for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1243 also called "THE PARK AND SLEEP RESIDENTIAL CAMPGROUNDS ACT.

TESTIMONY

The Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force is a group of citizens dedicated to researching and implementing practical solutions to the homeless crisis. This act is an essential part of a six-step legislative strategy we helped develop, with five goals in mind:

First: To ensure that every homeless person has somewhere to go where they can be reasonably comfortable.

Second: To make existing social service programs more effective.

Third: To protect the quality of life for residents and tourists.

Fourth: To find solutions that can be implemented quickly.

Fifth: To do all of that with money the State already has, instead of what we hope to have in the future.

As we all know, homelessness has degenerated from a serious problem, to a crisis, and in the last decade, utter chaos. The plight suffered by the homeless, especially those who are children is unacceptable. Illegal homeless camps, which are breeding grounds for disease and crime, and turn neighborhoods into trash dumps and toilets are not acceptable. Also unacceptable, is the suffering

and huge medical costs associated with the homeless having to use emergency rooms as their primary source of healthcare.

Your constituents (and I'm one of them) are desperate for bold and comprehensive solutions, that will have an immediate and substantial impact on the homeless crisis.

At the outset, I want to be clear that we applaud the efforts you are making to address this crisis, including but not limited to SB1215, which appropriates funds to DHS for Housing First" and related programs; and SB1223 which appropriates funds for mobile clinics.

The data shows that subsidized housing and "Housing First" programs are enormously effective with certain segments of the homeless population. Unfortunately, the reality is that the supply of subsidized housing always falls short of demand and probably always will. In Hawaii, what we call "affordable housing" costs about \$400,000 per unit and takes about eight years from inception to completion. And as I'm sure you're all aware, the State is saddled with billions in unfunded pension liabilities.

Also, even if we had all the money we needed today, subsidized housing does not address what outreach workers call the "service-resistant" homeless; These include addicts who refuse to participate in any programs that might pressure them into sobriety, including Housing First. Housing subsidies also don't address mentally ill homeless who suffer from anosognosia, a condition that prevents them from knowing they need help. And finally, housing subsidies don't address service - resistant "willing homeless" who actually prefer homelessness over the responsibilities of a more traditional life.

Shelters aren't the answer either. The homeless don't need a place to sleep, they need a place to live. Most homeless prefer living on the streets to a shelter. And even Homeless who willingly sleep in shelters, spend their waking hours aimlessly wandering the streets.

Some jurisdictions tried establishing "safe zones". The problem is that homeless encampments in "safe zones" have many of the same health and safety problems as illegal homeless camps.

Although all service-resistant homeless may be persuaded to accept services in the future, we need a strategy that will provide a place for these people to go today. We also need a place for people to go who are not

service resistant, but are newly homeless, and not yet connected to social services.

Legal Residential Campgrounds would substantially address all of these challenges quickly, and at a low cost.

The concept of residential campgrounds is simple. A home doesn't have to be an apartment, particularly in a place like Hawaii which is blessed with a tropical climate. Unlike "safe zones", residential campgrounds would have showers and bathrooms, a place for residents to lock valuables, an address where residents could receive mail, a place to cook food, and access to public transportation.

On Oahu, we've identified hundreds of acres of parks and undeveloped industrially-zoned government lands, which could be safe places to live in cars, tents, or other temporary dwellings. They would instantly provide a place for "service resistant" and newly homeless persons to go. Government and private organizations who provide supportive services for the homeless would also be far more effective if they could focus more of their efforts on helping the homeless instead of wasting resources just trying to locate unsheltered homeless people. Medical and psychiatric services, substance abuse programs, and even vocational training could be made available to people in tents as effectively as they could in apartments.

THE LOGISTICS:

As of 2016, the PIT count estimates of the homeless population in the State of Hawaii, both unsheltered and sheltered were roughly 3,700 unsheltered homeless, 4,400 sheltered homeless for a total homeless population of roughly 8100. Let's round up the figure of unsheltered homeless to 4000 to make the arithmetic easier.

Let's assume that each campground would be two acres, holding 200 campsites per campground. (Kaka'ako sized.). The logistics of residential campgrounds would break down as follows. An acre is defined as exactly equal to 1/640 of a square mile, or 43,560 square feet.. Each 2 acre parcel could comfortably hold 200 campsites, each sized 20 x 20 feet, which = 400 sf each, and still have 7120 sf left over for bathrooms, showers and facilities for supportive services.

On Oahu, we've identified hundreds of acres of unimproved government lands on Sand Island, Barber's Point and Mapunapuna.

For example, the Sand Island Recreation Area has 141 acres. Assume we used **JUST HALF of the Sand Island Recreation area. Half of the Sand Island Recreation area** could provide space for over 70 separate campgrounds, each with 200 campsites providing temporary homes for 14000 people, WHICH IS OVER THREE TIMES THE AMOUNT OF UNSHELTERED HOMELESS ACCORDING TO THE 2016 PIT COUNT.

CONCLUSION

Residential campgrounds could be established with money the State already spends, in less than a year. They could provide temporary homes for every homeless person in Hawaii. Residential Campgrounds do not stop a single subsidized housing program. They would enhance, not stop existing “Housing First” programs, and social services. I implore all of you to enact this bill.

I also invite all of you to spend just 10 minutes of your time visiting our website at www.hawaiikaihomelesstaskforce.org , to see how Residential Campgrounds would fit into our overall plan to turn the homeless crisis into a manageable problem with money the State has today.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.



February 5, 2017

TIM VANDEVEER
Chair
MARIE STRAZAR
Vice Chair

MARGARET WILLE
SEAN SMITH
Legislative Committee Co-Chairs

SB1243 “RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS”
February 6, 2017 3:05 pm State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Senator Josh Green, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Human Services

Senator Will Espiro, Chair
Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair
Committee on Housing

Submitted on Behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports SB1243 “Relating to Homelessness” which is designed to provide funding for camp grounds for the homeless. **The intent of this legislation is consistent with the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i’s legislative priority to provide housing and outreach for those who are homeless, including for youth at risk.**

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ *Tim Vandever* (tim@hawaiidemocrats.org)
Chair of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i
/s/ *Marie (Dolly) Strazar* (hilomds@gmail.com)
Vice Chair of the Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

/s/ *Margaret Wille* (margaretwille@mac.com)
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Legislative Committee Co-Chairs



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TESTIMONY FOR SENATE BILL 1243, RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Senate Committee on Human Services

Hon. Josh Green, Chair

Hon. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Housing

Hon. Will Espero, Chair

Hon. Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

Monday, February 6, 2017, 3:05 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 016

Honorable Chair Green, Chair Espero, and committee members:

I am Kris Coffield, representing IMUAlliance, a nonpartisan political advocacy organization that currently boasts over 350 members. On behalf of our members, we offer this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 1243, relating to homelessness.

According to the 2016 statewide *Point In Time Count* (PITC) report, 7,921 houseless persons were counted on a single night in January last year, up 4 percent from 2015. More than half of these persons were unsheltered. O’ahu accounted for 62 percent of the total (4,940 people), up 1 percent from the previous year. Kaua’i saw a 30 percent increase in the homeless population living on its shores (442 people), while the Big Island saw an increase of 12 percent (1,394 people). Overall, our state saw a 12 percent increase in the number of unsheltered homeless individuals and families and, concurrently, a 4.5 percent decrease in the number of sheltered individuals and families. Notably, the size of the houseless population on O’ahu is up 25 percent from 2009, when 3,638 homeless people were counted. Additionally, Department of Education officials said, last January, that 3,576 public school students are homeless. Last year's PITC captured just over half of them. We know, then, that our state’s homeless population is not only larger than the statistics show, but growing.

Over 30 percent of juvenile arrests in Hawai’i are for running away from home, the highest proportion in the nation. Nationally, one in seven young people between the ages of 10 and 18 will run away. Approximately 75 percent of runaways are female, while 46 percent of runaway and homeless youth report being physically abused, 38 percent report being emotionally abused, and 17 percent report being forced into unwanted sexual activity by a family or

household member, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Roughly 30 percent runaway children will be approached for commercial sexual exploitation within 48 hours of being on the run, with over 80 percent being approached for the sex trade during the course of their time on streets. A federal study found that an estimated 38,600 runaway youth have been sexually assaulted, in the company of someone known to be sexually abusive, or engaged in sexual activity in exchange for money, food, or shelter. Runaways are perceived as easy targets for sex traffickers because they lack stable shelter, a supportive environment, and financial resources, placing them at greater risk of forced prostitution and sexual servitude.

Traffickers exploit our limited number of available shelter beds to lure young people into exploitation. As the homeless childcare provider Covenant House observes, traffickers tell homeless youth that shelters are full and ask, “Where are you going to go? Why don’t you come with me? I’ll take care of you.” Coupled with threats of and enacted physical and sexual violence against the victims or their families, these coercive techniques compel runaway youth to remain enslaved. LGBTQ youth, who comprise an estimated 40 percent of the runaway and homeless youth population in the United States, are exponentially more likely to fall prey to human traffickers because of discrimination, family and community trauma, and a longing for comfort and acceptance (an estimated 26 percent of LGBTQ adolescents are rejected by their families and put out of their homes simply for being open and honest about who they are). In providing care for victims of human trafficking, IMUAlliance has heard their stories hundreds of times.

We must fund homeless services, including Housing First and rapid rehousing programs for chronically homeless individuals and people on the cusp of homelessness. We must not, however, lose sight of the fact that homeless people are members of our communities. Segregating houseless families from the communities in which they live—and for many, work—is cruel and implies that our unsheltered population is to be hidden, not served. Segregated campgrounds for the homeless would perpetuate the pernicious myth that paradise is primarily a playground for the rich. To truly address the issue of homelessness, we must find a balance between rampant real estate speculation and meeting the needs of our state’s most economically vulnerable residents. Just as our homeless population has soared over the past few years, so, too, has our state’s cost of housing. The median price of condominiums on O’ahu increased 8.3 percent in 2016 to \$390,000, while the median price for single-family homes increased by 6.5 percent to \$735,000, according to the Honolulu Board of Realtors. Average rent for a 900-square foot apartment in Honolulu now exceeds \$2,200, with the cost of a four-bedroom home in urban Honolulu now exceeding \$1.1 million. At least 44 percent of residences in Hawai’i are owner unoccupied, according to the University of Hawai’i Economic Research Organization, meaning that nearly 50 percent—and by some estimates over half—of Hawai’i’s homes are investment properties.

Many of those properties, in turn, are owned by mainland and foreign buyers, whose real estate market speculation is a prime driver of Hawai’i’s highest-in-the-nation cost of housing.

According to a study released in May of 2016 by the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, there are "clear distinctions" between the average price of homes bought by local residents, mainlanders, and foreigners. Analyzing purchases made between 2008 and 2015, DBEDT found: "The average sale price was highest among foreign buyers. The average sale price of the total of 5,775 homes sold to foreign buyers from 2008 to 2015 was \$786,186, 28.3 percent higher than the average sale price to the mainlanders (\$612,770) and 64.7 percent higher than the average sale price to local buyers (\$477,460)."

Researchers who authored the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2016* report found that a full-time worker would need to earn \$34.22/hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value in our state, with Honolulu experiencing a 67 percent increase in fair market rent between 2005 and 2015. Average rent for a two-bedroom unit surpassed \$2,100 in 2015, with average rent for a 900-square-foot exceeding \$2,200 in 2016. In the past three years alone, Honolulu rent has increased 23.5 percent. While 47 percent of Hawai'i residents are renters (a number that does not include individuals and families renting outside of the regulated rental market), they earn an average wage of \$14.49/hour, scarcely enough to meet their basic needs. One out of every four households in Hawai'i report that they are "doubling up" or are three paychecks or less away from being homeless, per the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Additionally, 54 percent of households are cost-burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs. Put simply, homelessness is directly tied to our state's exorbitant cost of living and penchant for catering to people who use the islands as their own private Monopoly board. We beseech you to seek innovative ways of making Hawai'i more affordable, while funding the services necessary to show aloha for our economically disadvantaged neighbors.

When you fund housing programs and human services for the homeless, you are helping to end slavery in Hawai'i. Please provide comprehensive care and services for our houseless population, rather than pass policies that treat them like lesser citizens. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,
Kris Coffield
Executive Director
IMUAlliance

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 2, 2017 10:27 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: erinrutherford815@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB1243 on Feb 6, 2017 15:05PM*

SB1243

Submitted on: 2/2/2017

Testimony for HMS/HOU on Feb 6, 2017 15:05PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Erin Rutherford	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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