

DAVID Y. IGE
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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
P. O. Box 339
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February 6, 2017

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

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB968 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: February 6, 2017, 3:10 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this administration bill to address shelter requirements. This measure addresses concerns raised by homeless service providers that the requirement of Act 234, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2016, for partitioned sleeping areas in homeless shelters is resulting in a reduction of emergency shelter bed spaces.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to allow DHS the flexibility to determine the appropriate standard for partitioned space, based upon guidelines established by DHS and ensure that shelter beds are not lost to the requirements of Act 234, Session Laws of Hawaii 2016. In addition, the measure extends the effective date to give DHS time to implement the act.

Act 234, SLH 2016, established minimum standards for every homeless shelter to make shelters more amenable to homeless clients. Act 234, SLH 2016, also required that payments be based off of performance measures and audit requirements to ensure that the State is receiving the most value and the best services.

Giving DHS discretion and the flexibility to determine which shelters will or will not have partitions may prevent the unintended consequence of reducing the amount of bed space available to homeless people.

The extension of the effective date of the Act, will ensure that DHS will be able to work with the affected service providers to get appropriate feedback and draft administrative rules on new shelter standards that will benefit homeless individuals and families, service providers, and the State.

The Administration's proposed amendments to Act 234, SLH 2016, are part of a comprehensive framework to address homelessness, which seeks to transition homeless individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The framework includes a focus on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. All three of these leverage points must be addressed to continue forward momentum in addressing the complex issue of homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and provide comments on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 6, 2017

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

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

SUBJECT: SB 964 – RELATING TO HOMELESS SHELTERS

Hearing: Monday, February 6, 2017, 3:10 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this Administration bill. The Coordinator notes this bill addresses concerns raised by homeless service providers that the requirement in Act 234, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2016, for partitioned sleeping areas in homeless shelters may result in a reduction of emergency shelter bed spaces.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to amend provisions of Act 234, SLH 2016, to provide emergency shelters with the flexibility to provide partitioned sleeping spaces for homeless persons or families based upon guidelines determined by the Department of Human Services (DHS). The bill also extends the effective date of Act 234, SLH 2016, section 6(b) by one year.

Act 234, SLH 2016, established minimum requirements for every homeless emergency shelter operated by a provider agency that is under contract with DHS. In an attempt to make the system of homeless shelters more cost effective and more appealing to families and individuals, the Act directed that payments be conditioned on performance measures and established audit provisions.

The Coordinator notes that providing the option to implement partitions will provide needed flexibility to emergency shelter providers. Without this flexibility, the

requirement to mandate partitioned space may have the unintended consequence of adversely impacting bed space at certain shelters, especially those located on the neighbor islands. Emergency shelter bed space is especially limited on the neighbor islands, which have seen the largest percentage increase in unsheltered homeless persons according to the 2016 statewide homeless point in time count.

The amendment to provide flexibility in regard to partitioned bed space will also impact bed spaces for shelters partially funded by other departments, such as the Department of Health (DOH). For example, mental health group homes are sometimes funded as emergency shelters by both DOH and DHS. If partitioned spaces are mandated, rather than optional, this may adversely impact limited bed space in some mental health group homes.

The Coordinator further notes that additional time is needed for DHS to obtain feedback from homeless service providers prior to the formal adoption of administrative rules to implement new shelter standards required by Act 234, SLH 2016.

The Administration's proposed amendments to Act 234 are part of a comprehensive framework to address homelessness, which seeks to transition homeless individuals and families into permanent housing as quickly as possible. The framework includes a focus on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. All three of these leverage points must be addressed to continue forward momentum in addressing the complex issue of homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



February 5, 2017

TIM VANDEVEER
Chair
MARIE STRAZAR
Vice Chair

MARGARET WILLE
SEAN SMITH
Legislative Committee Co-Chairs

SB964 “RELATING TO HOMELESS SHELTERS”

February 6, 2017 3:10 pm State Capitol, Conference Room 016

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

Submitted on Behalf of the Democratic Party of Hawaii

The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i supports SB964 “Relating to Homeless Shelters” which will authorize funding for emergency shelters 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 to the homeless.**

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)
/s/ *Sean Smith* (simashang@yahoo.com)
Legislative Committee Co-Chairs

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Sunday, February 5, 2017 2:38 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: dylanarm@hawaii.edu
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB964 on Feb 6, 2017 15:10PM*

SB964

Submitted on: 2/5/2017

Testimony for HMS on Feb 6, 2017 15:10PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

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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From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Friday, February 3, 2017 10:02 PM
To: HMS Testimony
Cc: rkailianu57@gmail.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB964 on Feb 6, 2017 15:10PM

SB964

Submitted on: 2/3/2017

Testimony for HMS on Feb 6, 2017 15:10PM in Conference Room 016

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rachel L. Kailianu	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments: Strongly support

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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