

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Chair Senator Josh Green

Vice Chair Senator Stanley Chang

March 17, 2017

2:50PM

HB 1195

I am Joseph Butindaro, a graduate student at the University of Hawaii at the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work. I am testifying in support of HB 1195.

Currently, I have noticed the link between incarceration, mental illness, and the perpetuation of homelessness in the state. It is a known fact that homelessness is a crisis here in the State of Hawaii, and that the numbers of people whom are homeless continue to grow annually. At my current place of internship, I have been privileged enough to assist in counseling and providing therapy for various clients whom have criminal records and who are currently seeking shelter and work. I believe it is of utmost importance that these individuals receive treatment and support services in order to become more productive members of society and to decrease the homeless population of the State.

This is why I am in agreement of Page 2, Lines 1 – 9.

Joseph Butindaro

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Ending The Cycle of Homelessness

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Kimo K. Carvalho
546 Kaaahi Street
Honolulu, HI 96817

RE: IHS TESTIMONY - PROPOSED AMMENDMENT TO HB1195

Honorable Chair,

IHS is in strong support of HB 1195 to appropriate multiple homeless outreach initiatives as part of a robust and coordinated entry into homeless services and housing placement programs, and for all the various homeless subpopulations mentioned.

As part of this bill, IHS is requesting that the bill be amended to include two new sections:

1. Insert: "We request that \$_____ be allocated for ongoing rental subsidies to house homeless and persons at imminent risk of becoming homeless, and _____ positions to operate the program. Monies are to be expended by _____ department."

IHS is advocating that we continue to provide various housing options that would allow our homeless outreach teams to match the right individual to the most cost efficient and effective housing support program. As of right now, with shallow subsidies being cut from the executive budget, we cannot offer those options. We propose that the language be inserted back in to accommodate a variety of homeless subpopulations at risk and unsheltered, encountered through our homeless service agencies.

2. Insert: "To reduce the backlog of fitness examinations and thus guard a person's right to a speedy trial through legal proceedings, the court shall appoint at least one, but not more than three, qualified examiners in felony cases, and one qualified examiner in non-felony cases, to examine and report upon the defendants fitness to proceed. In felony cases, the court shall appoint at least one psychiatrist or licensed psychologist as an examiner. Any other examiner may be a psychiatrist, licensed psychologist, or qualified physician. In non-felony cases, the court may appoint as examiners either a psychiatrist or a licensed psychologist. All examiners shall be appointed from a list of certified examiners as determined by the department of health. The court, in appropriate circumstances, may appoint an additional examiner or examiners. The examination may be conducted while the defendant is in custody or on release or, in the courts discretion, when necessary the court may order the defendant to be committed to a hospital or other suitable facility for the purpose of the examination for a period not exceeding thirty days, or a longer period as the court determines to be necessary for the purpose. The court may direct that one or more qualified physicians or psychologists retained by the defendant be permitted to witness the examination." –Ref SB620

IHS' homeless outreach team is encountering many more unsheltered homeless with severe mental illnesses. Many of these clients are chronically homeless and require longer term stabilization than acute care hospitalization or emergency shelters can offer. The only place that provides long term stabilization is the Hawaii State Hospital, which requires someone to be charged with a crime prior to being admitted. A 3 to 1 panel

would help to more quickly have people unfit to proceed adjudicated, which would then create more space for people who need psychiatric stabilization.

As of right now, the State hospital has become a forensic facility and no longer accepts civil commitments. Perhaps if there was more rapid movement of patients through the hospital, they could once again accept civil commitments, which would provide more long term stabilization that chronic homeless need and so that our homeless outreach teams can commit our clients to long-term treatment.

Getting our unsheltered homeless with mental illnesses into long term stabilization has been very challenging. This policy would be at no cost. Rather, it would be a weak that would fast track people through the system, and getting them access to treatment, quicker. One could argue that it would make our homeless outreach programs more effective, and further help reduce unnecessary costs to our health and human services systems.

Mahalo,
Kimo K. Carvalho
Director of Community Relations
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

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Relating to LAW ENFORCEMENT /HOMELESSNESS

Testimony for HB1195 (LEAD) Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion

NOTICE: Please add below to in addition to current testimony.

Request be made that \$_____ be allocated for ongoing rental subsidies to house homeless and persons at imminent risk of becoming homeless, and _____ positions to operate the program. Monies are to be expended by _____ department. The reason we are asking this is because it has been taken out of the executive budget; we would like to have it in a stand-alone bill so that there can be benchmarks to measure its effectiveness.

I speak in support of this bill. New approaches to law enforcement must be entertained. We can no longer have a draconian “lock them up throw away the key” policy approach that create a population of individuals relegated to a life of second class citizenry. In addition, per research approximately 125 dollars per day is being spent on persons in custody awaiting trial. 50 percent of the population within OCCC fit this current category. From going to community meeting regarding incarceration and public safety, some persons arrested (primarily homeless or poor individuals) who are unable to pay \$50 or \$100 dollars fine will remain in custody. It would be of the best interest of this committee to consider that \$125 a day is approximately \$45,625 per year (based upon 125dollars x 365 days). Per month this amount totals \$3,802. Having individuals arrested for petty crimes being able to be released to a social service provider with supporting services would be far more cost effective than spending close to \$4,000 dollars per month keeping that person behind bars who is unable to pay for 50 or 100 dollars to be released.

This bill is part of the solution in promoting Harm reduction methods and strategies. The LEAD program is not a diversionary program per se, but will increase positive interface between Law Enforcement and the community and more importantly interface between law enforcement and person whom they might

have encounters with. Places like Seattle has found success with the LEAD program. Hawaii such be the next champion of this policy. I strongly support this policy and also the companion Bill HB 535 within the House and, all other data driven harm reduction policy measures. This is not only a fiscally sound policy but also lead to better outcomes and a safer community.

Furthermore, I would like to add that other additional request within the bill regarding the following apportions should be voted for in the affirmative like the LEAD. These programs will save the state millions more dollars then what we are currently spending trying to deal with problem of homeless and mental health rather than preventive approaches.

\$1,000,000 for outreach to homeless persons with serious and persistent mental illness

\$800,000 for outreach, counseling, and diversion for homeless unsheltered persons experience substance abuse

\$1,200,000 for outreach to individuals and families with children

\$300,000 for outreach to unaccompanied youth

\$500,000 for civil legal services for homeless person

Ken Farm (Speaking only for myself)

Member-At-Large

Kalihi-Palama Neighborhood Board No 15