

**LATE**



**EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS**  
HONOLULU

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
GOVERNOR

February 8, 2018

TO: The Honorable Representative Tom Brower, Chair  
House Committee on Housing

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

SUBJECT: **HB1529 HD1 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Thursday, February 8, 2018, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 423, State Capitol

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure, as the State has made significant progress in its efforts to end veteran homelessness. The Coordinator defers to the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission on the merits of the bill, and notes that U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers have been a critical tool in reducing the number of homeless veterans. Between 2016 and 2017, the number of homeless veterans on Oahu *decreased* by 8%.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to prohibit discrimination in the rental of real property based on a veteran's use of HUD-VASH vouchers.

The Coordinator notes that the HUD-VASH program is a form of permanent supportive housing, which pairs an ongoing rental housing subsidy together with supportive case management services. The HUD-VASH program is similar to the state Housing First program and primarily addresses the needs of chronically homeless individuals.

Although HUD-VASH provides assistance with rent, some homeless veterans may face discrimination from landlords who are reluctant to rent to a person who is issued a "voucher" for rental assistance. According to feedback from service providers, a landlord may identify a veteran with a "voucher" as someone who is low-income or experiencing homelessness, and

may be reluctant to rent to the individual as a result. The Coordinator notes that homeless participants in the state Housing First program and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program have reported similar challenges with certain landlords being reluctant to rent to a tenant with a “voucher.”

Despite potential discrimination from landlords, the HUD-VASH program has been a critical tool in addressing veteran homelessness. With the assistance of HUD-VASH and other similar programs, the number of homeless veterans on Oahu has decreased by 8% between 2016 and 2017 – a decrease of 55 people.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1529 HD1, RELATING TO HOUSING

PRESENTATION TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

February 08, 2018  
9:30 a.m.

Good morning, Chair Brower, Vice Chair Nakamura, and members of the Committee:

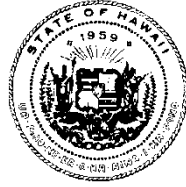
I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony **in support** of the concepts in House Bill 1529.

This measure prohibits discrimination in the rental of real property based on use of HUD-VASH vouchers to support our Veterans in need of shelter and services.

The OVS supports the concepts and intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY  
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 17907  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

Statement of  
**Hakim Ouansafi**  
Hawaii Public Housing Authority  
Before the

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING**

**Thursday, February 8, 2018**  
**9:30 AM**  
**Room 423, Hawaii State Capitol**

In consideration of  
**HB 1529, HD1**  
**RELATING TO HOUSING**

Honorable Chair Brower and Members of the House Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning House Bill (HB) 1529, HD1, relating to housing.


The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) is in support of HB 1529, HD1, which prohibits discrimination in the rental of real property based on a veteran's use of HUD-VASH vouchers.


Throughout the State, thousands are competing to find homes amidst an affordable housing crisis. This is especially true for veterans, who often return to Hawaii in need of assistance and resources. HUD-VASH vouchers provide veterans an opportunity to find affordable housing, with HPHA as the leader in Hawaii for housing veterans. Currently, there are 466 veterans with VASH vouchers. In addition, 36 are voucher holders in search of housing, with many searching for many months. The proposed bill will assist in expediting the placement process for veterans trying to secure suitable housing.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the House Committee on Housing with the HPHA's comments regarding HB 1529, HD1. We thank you very much for your dedicated support.



 | 808-733-7060

 | 808-737-4977

 | 1259 A'ala Street, Suite 300  
Honolulu, HI 96817

February 8, 2018

**The Honorable Tom Brower, Chair**

House Committee on Housing  
State Capitol, Room 423  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: H.B. 1529, HD1, Relating to Housing**

**HEARING: Thursday, February 8, 2018, at 9:30 a.m.**

Aloha Chair Brower, Vice Chair Nakamura, and Members of the Committee,

I am Ken Hiraki, Government Affairs Director, here to testify on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i, and its 9,500 members. HAR **opposes** H.B. 1529, HD1, which prohibits discrimination in the rental of real property based on a veteran's use of a housing assistance voucher pursuant to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and Department of Veterans Affairs supportive housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers, including advertisements for available rentals.

This measure makes it a discriminatory practice under the Landlord-Tenant Code, similar to Hawaii's Fair Housing law (Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 515), to engage in a broad list of discriminatory practices based on a veteran's use of HUD-VASH vouchers. Provisions under HRS Chapter 515 apply to appraisals, mortgages, mortgage lending, real estate contracts, inspection, and real estate services.

HAR is concerned that this measure proposes to add a specific prohibition against discrimination based on a veteran's use of HUD-VASH vouchers to the Landlord-Tenant code, despite the existence of Chapter 515 which already protects against other discriminatory practices under Hawaii's fair housing law. This measure also essentially equates it to the level of a "protected class" under Hawaii's fair housing law.

The issue of whether a landlord is engaged in a discriminatory practice, simply by not choosing to participate in the HUD-VASH program, becomes subjective and ambiguous. As a result, even the most diligent landlord could find himself or herself the subject of a fair housing complaint.

For the foregoing reasons, we respectfully request that this committee hold this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



**HB-1529-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 8:51:21 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/8/2018 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities	Support	No

Comments:



49 South Hotel Street, Room 314 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
www.lwv-hawaii.com | 808.531.7448 | voters@lwv-hawaii.com

## COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Thursday, February 8, 2018, 9:30 AM, room 423

HB 1529, Relating to Housing

### TESTIMONY

Nina Eejima, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Brower, Vice-Chair Nakamura, and Committee Members:

**The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports HB 1529 that prohibits discrimination in the rental of real property based on a veteran's use of HUD-VASH vouchers.**

We note that the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) program combines Housing Choice Voucher rental assistance for homeless veterans with case management and clinical services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA website states that veterans who need case management services have serious mental illness, substance use disorder history, or physical disability. We further note that the federal Fair Housing Act that protects people from discrimination when they are renting, buying, or securing financing for any housing explicitly prohibits discrimination because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and the presence of children and that this bill provides a specific state statutory basis prohibiting discrimination against HUD-VASH recipients.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

**HB-1529-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 5:07:53 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/8/2018 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez		Support	No

Comments: