



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 9, 2018

TO: The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2649 – RELATING TO HOMELESS**

Hearing: Friday, February 9, 2018, 8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill requires DHS to contract with an organization to establish a pilot program to address all aspects of chronic homelessness in the 96817 zip code. Appropriates moneys.

DHS Homeless Programs Office (HPO) currently contracts homeless outreach services with providers statewide. Outreach services may include housing identification, linkages to supportive services, assistance with public benefits, and appropriate referrals to services. HPO currently has only one shelter located in the 96817 zip code.

DHS recently expanded its Housing First program services statewide. From May to December 2017, Housing First served a total of 181 unduplicated households and 24 unduplicated individuals: 87 unduplicated households and 125 unduplicated participants on Oahu; 75 unduplicated households and 88 unduplicated participants on Hawaii Island; 6 unduplicated households and 7 unduplicated participants on Kauai; and 13 unduplicated households and 21 unduplicated participants on Maui. Ninety-seven percent of participants, who are hardest to serve, remaining in housing with supportive services and rent subsidies.

Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their well-being. Moreover, this bill does not align with Housing First by incentivizing shelter stays with cash.

Other communities have tried a variety of cash incentives in the past, without much evidence that healthy behaviors follow. Providing monetary incentives will not guarantee a person's desire to enter program. However, those who enter program specifically for the incentive, will have less incentive to leave, adding another problem. DHS suggest exploring the idea of incentives to landlords for housing homeless participants that's being done in other communities facing increases in their homeless population.

DHS appreciates the willingness of the legislature to explore ways to be innovative to improve the state's response to homelessness. DHS asks that the committee continue to support the Governor's supplemental budget request to address homelessness and the framework plan established to address homelessness in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS**  
HONOLULU

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
GOVERNOR

February 9, 2018

**TO:** The Honorable Representative John M. Mizuno, Chair  
House Committee on Health and Human Services

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

**SUBJECT: HB 2649 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Friday, February 9, 2018, 8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure, and offers comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to require the Department of Human Services (DHS) to establish a pilot program to contract for a single organization to conduct outreach for, conduct enforcement of trespass laws against, and provide shelter for chronically homeless individuals within the 96817 postal zip code on the island of Oahu. In addition, the bill specifies that the contract described in the measure shall provide a \$12 nightly stipend to be paid to chronically homeless individuals for each night that they successfully stay in a homeless shelter. The bill appropriates monies to DHS for the contract, and requires DHS to submit a report to the Legislature of its findings and recommendations on the pilot project.

Homelessness remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Hawaii, and the State has adopted a comprehensive framework to address homelessness that focuses on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. The Coordinator works closely with multiple state agencies to implement this framework by working with State agencies and law enforcement to connect trespass and other enforcement efforts together with the offer of services and housing-focused programs, such as Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. The coordinated efforts to implement the State's framework to address

homelessness have made progress in reducing the number of homeless individuals statewide. In 2017, the statewide Point in Time (PIT) count found that the number of homeless people in Hawaii had *decreased* for the first time in eight years – a decrease of 701 people between 2016 and 2017.

The Coordinator appreciates the Legislature’s willingness to support innovative approaches to addressing the complex challenge of homelessness. However, the Coordinator is concerned about the adverse impact that an appropriation for this measure may have on priorities in the Governor’s supplemental budget request for existing homeless programs. Collectively, the homeless programs administered by DHS and other State agencies represent an array of financial resources designed to provide one-time crisis assistance, as well as medium term (3-24 months) and longer-term support. This mix of short-, medium-, and long-term assistance is designed to transition at-risk and homeless individuals and families into stable housing, and is also designed to prevent homelessness by assisting formerly homeless individuals in maintaining housing over time. Accordingly, the Coordinator respectfully requests the Legislature’s support of the Governor’s supplemental budget request, which includes over \$15 million for homeless services administered by DHS and DOH.

The Coordinator notes that, as currently drafted, this measure raises a number of issues that may adversely impact the implementation of the pilot program. In particular, the specific geographic parameters and the requirement that a single contractor must conduct outreach, shelter and enforcement may result in difficulty in securing a contractor. In addition, the \$12 incentive for shelter stay may have the unintended consequence of lengthening a chronically homeless individual’s stay in shelter, and inadvertently lengthening the time a chronically homeless individual remains homeless. As currently drafted, there is no restriction on the maximum length of time that a chronically homeless individual may receive the \$12 financial incentive for shelter stay.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

**HB-2649**

Submitted on: 2/7/2018 8:12:38 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Louise Storm		Support	No

Comments:

I understand that this will be a pilot program to figure out whether a more coordinated approach to dealing with the homeless can produce better results. Currently, different organizations address various aspects of the situation, but law enforcement just moves the problem to a different location, feeding programs don't fully address the hygiene and health issues, substance abuse and mental health aspects are frequently not addressed meaningfully, etc.

We are already devoting a significant amount of resources to eliminate this problem, but evaluating how we can make these efforts more cost effective (with emphasis on "effective") should be a central part of the equation.

Louise Storm

**HB-2649**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 4:44:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/9/2018 8:30:00 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:

**PRESENTATION OF THE  
OAHU COUNTY COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

THE SENATE

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION OF 2018

Friday, February 9, 2018

8:30 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329

**RE: Testimony in Support** of HB 2649, RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

To the Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair; the Honorable Bertrand Kobayashi, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee on Health & Human Services:

Good morning. My name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii ("DPH"). Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill No.2649 relating to DHS to establish a pilot program to address chronic homelessness in the 96817 zip code.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in support of House Bill No.2649 and is in favor of its passage.

House Bill No.2649 is in accord with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it requires DHS to contract with an organization to establish a pilot program to address all aspects of chronic homelessness in the 96817 zip code, including a \$12 nightly stipend payable to chronically homeless individuals for each night that they successfully stay in a homeless shelter.

Specifically, the DPH Platform provides that "[w]e believe in the concept of "Housing first" to develop affordable, stable housing and support services to break the cycle of homelessness for people with the fewest housing options.. We support dedicated social services and housing opportunities for Hawaii's homeless population to get them off the streets and reintegrated into society with specific devoted services for disenfranchised groups including but not limited to the Hawaiian Community aged-out foster kids youth, returning veterans, the aged, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender homeless." (Platform of the DPH, P. 7, Lines 352-358 (2016)).

Given that House Bill No. 2649 provides that DHS establish a pilot program to address chronic homelessness in the 96817 zip code, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ **Melodie Aduja**

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC Legislative Priorities Committee

Email: [legislativepriorities@gmail.com](mailto:legislativepriorities@gmail.com), Tel.: (808) 258-8889

**HB-2649**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 11:07:23 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Stuart Asahina		Support	No

Comments:

I would like to express my support for HB2649 to provide funding that will test a centralized dedicated team that can work across the various entities dealing with specific aspects of homelessness.

It is clear that the current approach is having limited success. Although I believe that all of Representative Ohno's ideas are excellent, well thought out, and need to be simultaneously addressed to have a significant impact on homelessness, HB2649 would at least be a good start and will hopefully make things easier for each of those entities trying to deal with the problem.

I have experienced first hand dealing with homeless people both at my office as well as my home. I wasn't sure who to call, and ended up contacting HPD. Although they were helpful and did their best, it seemed that the only real authority they had was to trespass them. But there were obvious and frustrating jurisdictional problems that limited them. Also, I don't believe there are laws that HPD has to enforce regarding vagrancy. And I don't think they were trained (or responsible) for alternative sources to provide the homeless with assistance.

Please pass HB2649 so we can test this way to improve coordination and communication between those who are addressing the problems of homelessness.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Stuart Asahina



**HB-2649**

Submitted on: 2/8/2018 10:22:23 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Neal Wu	Liliha resident	Support	No

Comments:

I support HB2649 for the following reasons:

1. Enforcement of laws involving homelessness is the responsibility of every law-abiding citizen in this city.
2. Enforcement measures provide social justice and stability for all communities in this city.
3. Without enforcement those who continue to violate the laws involving homelessness will continue to disregard and disrespect the rights and quality of life of all law-abiding citizens in this city.

Mahalo for the opportunity to express my support for HB2649.

Neal Wu, Liliha Resident