



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

February 14, 2018

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

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2753 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 14, 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. DHS supports this bill provided that the measure's passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the supplemental budget. DHS asks for the Legislature's support for the supplemental budget requests.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill establishes the Ohana Zone Pilot Program. Defines the intent of the pilot program, and sets preliminary milestones that shall be met by the Department of Human Services in establishing the pilot program. Appropriates funds.

DHS request clarification of Ohana Zone as it appears to be a similar concept to Safe Zones. If it is in fact a safe zone, many experts on the issue of homelessness agree that these types of safe zones encourage more safe zones. It is important for government to build affordable low income housing to increase the inventory of permanent housing instead of temporary camps. Barbara Poppe, former Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), stated that tent cities are not part, or should not be part of the government's response to homelessness.

DHS Homeless Programs Office (HPO) is not opposed to taking lead on this project and is willing to provide oversight on the Ohana pilot program in coordination with the

Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness.
Should HPO be tasked with taking the lead, HPO requests for exemption from Chapters 103D
and 103F and adopt Chapter 91 of interim rules.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 14, 2017

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 2753 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports the intent of this measure, as it proposes innovative solutions to address the complex challenge of homelessness, and offers the following comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish a three-year Ohana Zone Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services (DHS), and provides an appropriation of an unspecified level of funding for fiscal year 2018-2019. The bill requires DHS to consult with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and with people experiencing homelessness to identify and evaluate locations in which an Ohana Zone may be established, including locations that are on private property. In addition, the bill requires DHS – in consultation with people experiencing homelessness - to establish criteria, a monthly timetable of milestones, performance measures, evaluation criteria, and monitoring and oversight controls for the Ohana Zone Pilot Program by December 31, 2018, and requires the establishment of an Ohana Zone no later than June 30, 2019. DHS will also be required to submit reports to the Legislature prior to the 2019, 2020, and 2021 regular sessions in regard to the pilot program.

The Coordinator appreciates the Legislature's efforts to adopt innovative solutions to the complex challenge of homelessness, and the inclusion of feedback from people experiencing homelessness to inform the development of programs to assist this population.

However, the Coordinator notes that coordinated efforts to address homelessness through the State’s framework plan are working, and that in 2017 the statewide Point in Time (PIT) count found that the number of homeless people in Hawaii *decreased* for the first time in eight years – a *decrease* of 701 people between 2016 and 2017. It is critical that the State continue to invest in programs that have contributed to this decrease – such as Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, homeless outreach, and the Family Assessment Center – and should this measure proceed, the Coordinator respectfully requests that it does not adversely impact funding for existing homeless services and related priorities in the Governor’s Supplemental Budget request.

As currently drafted, “Ohana Zones” appear to be substantially similar to the concept of “Safe Zones,” which have previously been studied by the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness. The 2017 Safe Zones Working Group – established by Act 212, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017 – found that the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – remain opposed to the implementation of safe zones, and expressed concerns that funding of safe zones may result in funding being directed from other programs that more directly address housing. In a 2015 report, the USICH acknowledged that the formation of tent encampments does not represent an end to homelessness and can “serve to distract communities from focusing on what is most important – connecting people experiencing homelessness to safe, stable, permanent housing.”¹

In addition, the 2017 Safe Zones Working Group found that many Safe Zones lack hygiene facilities and basic infrastructure (e.g. electricity, water, and sewer). To address these concerns, the Coordinator suggests that the measure be amended to clarify that Ohana Zones shall include necessary hygiene facilities and basic infrastructure, and include language differentiating an “Ohana Zone” from a “Safe Zone” or “tent encampment.”

Finally, the Coordinator recognizes the urgent need to implement programs to address homelessness. To enable DHS to comply with the June 30, 2019 deadline to establish an Ohana Zone, the Coordinator suggests the measure be amended to include specific exemptions from

¹ U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, *Ending Homelessness for People Living in Encampments: Advancing the Dialogue*, August 2015.

chapters 103D and 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for efforts related to the establishment and implementation of the Ohana Safe Zone Pilot Program. In addition, if the development of administrative rules are required, the measure should be amended to enable DHS and other relevant executive branch agencies to develop interim rules without regard to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, for the purposes of the pilot program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

**Wednesday, February 14, 2018
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2753
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

House Bill 2753 proposes to establish an 'Ohana Zone pilot program within the Department of Human Services (DHS). **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) acknowledges DHS' testimony in support and offers the following comments.**

SECTION 3 (b) requires consultation with the Department and with people experiencing homelessness to identify and evaluate locations in which an 'ohana zone may be established. The Department suggests the following amendment:

(b) The department shall consult with land holding state agencies, as appropriate, including the department of land and natural resources, the department of transportation and the department of accounting and general services, and with people experiencing homelessness [~~to identify and evaluate locations in which an ohana zone may be established, beginning with the locations previously identified as potential safe zone sites in the final report~~]

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

~~submitted by the working group to examine the feasibility of safe zones pursuant to Act 212, Session Laws of Hawaii 2017.]~~, and advocates for people experiencing homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-2753

Submitted on: 2/12/2018 6:08:33 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/14/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
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 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2018**

Monday, February 14, 2018

8:30 a.m.

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329

RE: Testimony in Support of HB 2753 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

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

Good afternoon, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") Legislative Priorities Committee of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill No. 2753, relating to Ohana Zone Pilot Program.

The OCC Legislative Priorities Committee is in favor of House Bill No.2753 and supports its passage as it establishes a pilot program for the establishment of ohana zones, with the goal of improving the health and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness and providing individuals experiencing homelessness with needed

services. "Ohana zone" means a physical location that has a program that admits individuals experiencing homelessness, provides the individual a place to stay for a maximum of ___ days, and provides referrals to medical or social services, with the goal of placing the individual in permanent housing.

House Bill No.2753 is in alignment with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it establishes the Ohana Zone Pilot Program and defines the intent of the pilot program, and sets preliminary milestones that will be met by the Department of Human Services in establishing the pilot program.

The DPH Platform states 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. 2753 establishes the Ohana Zone Pilot Program, 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, Tel.: (808) 258-8889

LATE

HB-2753

Submitted on: 2/13/2018 7:14:36 PM
Testimony for HHS on 2/14/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

HB-2753

Submitted on: 2/13/2018 10:53:06 PM
Testimony for HHS on 2/14/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Hawaii Psychological Association	Hawaii Psychological Association	Support	No

Comments:

The Hawaii Psychological Association supports the establishment of Ohana zones for the homeless. A supportive peer environment, when organized and managed well, can have *significant positive effects on physical and psychological health*. The Hawaii Psychological Association recommends that appropriate measures of physical and psychological health be utilized in evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot project.