

**EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS**  
HONOLULU

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
GOVERNOR

March 22, 2018

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

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

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

**SUBJECT: HCR 239 / HR 207 – URGING STAGE AGENCIES AND INTERESTED PARTIES TO  
WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO LIMIT HOMELESSNESS AND  
ASSIST THE EXISTING HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN WINDWARD OAHU.**

Hearing: Thursday, March 22, 2018, 11:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 423, State Capitol

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

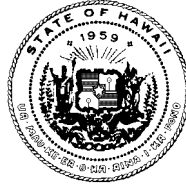
**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this measure is to urge the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, the Director of Human Services, the Kailua Neighborhood Board, the Kaneohe Neighborhood Board, the Waimanalo Neighborhood Board, the Ko'olaupua Neighborhood Board, the Kahuku Neighborhood Board, the Institute for Human Services, and appropriate non-profit organizations to work together to develop strategies to limit homelessness and assist the existing homeless individuals in Windward Oahu.

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. In particular, the State has worked together with the Legislature and other stakeholders to increase resources for permanent housing programs, such as Housing First and Rapid Rehousing. Between 2015 and 2017, the number of permanent housing beds for homeless

individuals statewide increased by 1,986 – an increase of 146%, more than doubling the supply of permanent beds. As a result of the State’s coordinated efforts, Hawaii is making 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 acknowledges the need for a collaborative approach to address homelessness in Windward Oahu and all parts of the state. The Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) has adopted a collaborative approach that includes representatives from the federal, state, and local governments; social service providers; faith-based representatives; and business-sector representatives. If this measure moves forward, the Coordinator suggests the measure be amended to include representatives from the local business community and agencies from the City and County of Honolulu, including the Mayor’s Office of Housing, Department of Community Services, and the Department of Land Management.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

March 22, 2018

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

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

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HCR 239/HR 207 – URGING STAGE AGENCIES AND INTERESTED PARTIES TO  
WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO LIMIT HOMELESSNESS AND  
ASSIST THE EXISTING HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN WINDWARD OAHU.**

Hearing: Thursday, March 22, 2018, 11:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 432, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offer comments. DHS currently participates on a number of councils and work groups addressing strategies to address homelessness, such as the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), the Transit Oriented Development Council, and the Director is being added as a member of the Special Action Team on Affordable Rental Housing. Proponents of this resolution may want to consider attending and participating at the HICH meetings as this is the appropriate council and forum.

In order to continue the momentum in reducing homelessness DHS Homeless Programs Office (HPO) requires a minimum of \$13.4 million to continue administering the Housing First, Rapid Rehousing, homeless outreach services, and the Family Assessment Center. DHS asks the Legislature to support the Governor's Executive Budget request to address homelessness which includes \$1.5 million to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) for the Rent Supplement program; \$800,000 to the Department of Health (DOH) for

homeless outreach, counseling and diversion services for unsheltered persons experiencing substance abuse. The Department of Human Services also asks the Legislature to support \$29 million in the Executive Budget for HPHA to provide public housing improvements and renovations statewide.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the proposed resolution is urging state agencies and interested parties to work together to develop strategies to limit homelessness and assist the existing homeless individuals in Windward Oahu.

DHS acknowledges that homelessness in Hawaii is one of the major public issues of our time. Since 2010, when homeless programs were moved to DHS, the Homeless Programs Office has functioned primarily as a contracting agency. At the direction of the Legislature, in partnership with the community, the continua of care, the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, and the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homeless, DHS has played a major role in establishing a successful Housing First program from Chronically homeless who suffer from mental health and/or substance use disorders, or a chronic health condition. DHS contracts statewide shelter, outreach, rapid rehousing, homeless emergency grants, housing placement programs, and civil legal services. DHS also provides funding for the development and maintenance of the state’s Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a system required by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development.

Per section 346-378, HRS, the state’s Housing First program has been in operation on O’ahu for over four years (and recently expanded to neighbor islands), and has provided supportive housing to 115 chronically homeless, highly vulnerable individuals and family members during this period. Housing retention rate of the state’s Housing First program is approximately 97% – that is 97% remain housed – which far exceeds the national average of 80%.

DHS agrees the best strategy to end homelessness is to find people safe and affordable housing. Housing First is an approach that emphasizes stable permanent housing as a strategy for ending homelessness. As noted by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing section and supportive service participation, and that exercising that choice is likely to make a client more

successful in remaining housed and improving their life. The focus on childhood support services and family engagement programs do not align with the Housing First approach.

Additionally, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Hawaii has established a Coordinated Entry System (CES). Providers and community stakeholders from public and private sectors were invited to participate in the implementation and launching process. The CES is managed by the two Continua of Care (CoC) in Hawaii, Partners in Care on Oahu and Bridging the Gap on the Neighbor Island; the CoC coordinate services and maximize resources available to individuals and families.

Furthermore, DHS *'Ohana Nui* framework involves streamlining existing programs and funding to improve efficiencies and outcomes to achieve the greatest return on investment. Once programs are aligned through *'Ohana Nui* and the DHS Enterprise system is built, nearly all of DHS programs will be interoperable

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this resolution.

**HR-207**

Submitted on: 3/21/2018 10:35:55 AM

Testimony for HSG on 3/22/2018 11:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments: