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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY

Tuesday, February 6, 2018, 2:45 PM, room 225

SB 2884, RELATING TO TEMPORARY HOUSING

TESTIMONY

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

Chair Espero, Committee on Housing; Chair Nishihara, Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs; and Committee Members:

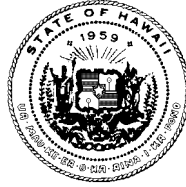
The League of Women Voters of Hawaii provides comments on SB 2884 that allows the state to construct temporary emergency transitional housing for homeless persons. The temporary housing shelters would be exempt from all state and country construction permits or similar requirements.

We support the urgent need to address the lack of temporary housing for our homeless individuals and families. Our state is in a crisis and agree that aggressive approaches are necessary, including the construction of temporary emergency transitional housing shelters on an expedited basis. We also agree that such housing construction needs to be carried out on an expedited basis.

However, we view with caution the proposed provisions that exempt construction from all state and country construction permits. We note that the permitting process enables the enforcement of rules that provide for health, safety, and general welfare. For example, railing requirements can prevent the accidental choking of a child who puts its head between stair rails, and can thus prevent bodily harm and even death. Permits in many instances can also ensure energy efficiency and environmentally-sensitive construction. While the proposed measure envisions that its occupants may reside in this temporary emergency transitional housing, the housing itself will in many cases not be so temporary in nature.

We urge the careful consideration of this exemption and suggest that the existing permitting processes reflect expedited approvals with clearly- and carefully-articulated exemptions, in contrast to the blanket statutory exemption that could negatively impact the safety and well-being of shelter residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



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

LATE

February 6, 2018

TO: The Honorable Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

The Honorable Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
House Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2884 – RELATING TO TEMPORARY HOUSING**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 6, 2018, 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments. DHS defers to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, the Department of Accounting and General Services, and State and County permitting agencies.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to allow the State to construct temporary emergency transitional housing for homeless persons without going through permitting process. Authorizes the State to cooperate with non-State actors to find permanent housing and other programs for homeless persons.

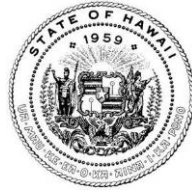
With regard to section 2, DHS requires clarification whether the intent is to blend emergency and transitional shelters. Current DHS contracts emphasize that providers shall only retain participants in the program for as long as services are needed and is aligned with a Housing First approach.

With regard to section 3. a – d, and f, we humbly defer to the more experienced and knowledgeable agencies named above as to the feasibility of different aspects of the proposal,

including the identification of properties, length of construction, and other provisions necessary to develop a housing project as proposed.

With regards to section 3. e, the proposed program is not aligned with the Housing First's premise of low barriers to housing. Housing First is an approach that emphasizes stable, permanent housing as a strategy for ending homeless. Housing First has been successfully implemented on Oahu and DHS Homeless Programs Office expanded the Housing First program to the neighbor islands. This bill may reverse the progress made through Housing First if it allows programs to set standards that will delay and not meet the needs of those who need shelter services the most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



LATE

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 6, 2018

TO: The Honorable Senator Will Espero, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

The Honorable Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **SB 2884 – RELATING TO TEMPORARY HOUSING**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 6, 2018, 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 225, 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 allow the State to construct temporary emergency transitional housing for homeless persons without going through the permitting process. In addition, the bill authorizes the State to cooperate with nonstate actors to find permanent housing and other programs for homeless persons.

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 or 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. In addition, the State has partnered to pair State land with County and other private sector resources to support projects, such as the Kahauiki Village opened in January

2018 and provides long-term rental housing for 30 homeless families. 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 notes this measure will require a state agency designated by the Governor to oversee the temporary emergency transitional housing shelter program, and construct temporary emergency transitional housing shelters. In addition, the designated state agency will be required "to provide assistance, services, programs, and employment," as well as "restroom, shower, and security services" for those in temporary emergency transitional housing shelters. However, the measure does not appropriate funds to support construction, ongoing operating costs, or the delivery of services for the temporary emergency transitional housing shelter program.

Accordingly, the Coordinator is concerned about the potential impact on current levels of funding for homeless services statewide, including the operation of emergency and transitional shelter programs, homeless outreach, Rapid Rehousing, and Housing First. 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.

The Coordinator further notes that the construction and installation of necessary infrastructure (e.g. sewer, water, electricity, and road access) requires specialized expertise that may be beyond the current capacity of DHS to administer. The Coordinator defers to DHS in regard to the contracting and monitoring of homeless services, and to the counties in regard to exemptions from county construction permits and other similar requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Testimony to the Senate Committees on Housing, and
Public Safety, Intergovernmental & Military Affairs
February 6, 2018

LATE

Testimony in Opposition of SB 2884, Relating to Temporary Housing

To: The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
The Honorable Breene Harimoto, Chair
The Honorable Clarence Nishihara, Vice-Chair
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committees

My name is Stefanie Sakamoto, and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaii Credit Union League, the local trade association for 57 Hawaii credit unions, representing over 800,000 credit union members across the state. We are in opposition of SB 2884, Relating to Temporary Housing.

On April 15, 2016, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sent a letter to Governor David Ige, warning of the impending removal of the State of Hawaii from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and eligibility for FEMA disaster relief due to the passage of Act 203 (2013), which exempted certain agricultural structures from building code and permit requirements. As a result, Act 70 was signed on July 6, 2017, amending the problematic exemptions. We are in opposition to SB 2884 because this legislation might trigger the same response from FEMA.

Disqualification of the state of Hawaii from the NFIP and FEMA would be devastating, not only to the real estate, insurance, and mortgage industries, but to the people of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.