

Will Caron SB4 Testimony

Will Caron for the Young Progressives Demanding Action testifying in strong support of this bill. Houselessness is on the rise. The underlying problems with our economic and social systems that lead to houselessness in our community have yet to be adequately addressed. These are families, school children, the elderly, the mentally ill and people with substance abuse problems that need our help, not our condemnation. Many nonprofits in our community recognize this, and are working tirelessly to bring vital health and human services to this vulnerable segment of our population. But they cannot continue to do this without support from the public and from the government. Making it easier for these nonprofits to be reimbursed by DHS for the services they provide is an important step in helping our houseless brothers and sisters.

We must do more than simply apply a tourniquet to the problem, however. We must begin to work with these community nonprofits, with the private sector, and with the public at large to change our public policy and societal norms to address the root causes of houselessness so that, one day, we can live in a Hawaii where no family is left out on the street; where each and every one of our school children can excel in education without worrying about whether they will be able to complete their homework in a tent that might be raided at any moment; where our kupuna do not suffer in squalor and poor health; where our mentally ill and our substance-addicted citizens are able to receive the treatment they need to remain productive in society. We are only as strong, as a society, as the least fortunate among us, and

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