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DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

March 11, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

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

SUBJECT: HB 1945 HD1 – RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX

Hearing: Wednesday, March 11, 2020, 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 414, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure and offers comments. The Coordinator supports the efforts of the tourism industry in taking an active role in addressing homelessness and recognizes the need for collaboration across a broad cross-sector of stakeholders.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator respectfully requests the Legislature consider requiring the Hawaii Tourism Association (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) to consult with the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) prior to finalizing funding awards for projects addressing homelessness.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to allocate Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriate funds HTA and HLTA to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds. The bill also requires HTA to report to the Legislature prior to the convening of the 2021 regular session.

The HICH, a 27-member advisory council chaired by the Coordinator, is required by statute to “serve as the statewide homelessness planning and policy development entity with broad representation from state and county government and the community.” The HICH

membership includes the county homeless coordinators for Oahu, Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii island, who are tasked with developing and implementing local plans to address homelessness, including in tourist and resort areas on their respective islands. Accordingly, the Coordinator requests the Legislature consider an amendment to require HTA and HLTA to consult with the HICH prior to finalizing funding awards for projects addressing homelessness. Consultation with the HICH would provide feedback from the counties and CoCs regarding existing homeless programs in the community and would identify opportunities to scale successful programs and address gaps in services in specific geographic areas.

The Coordinator notes that this bill is like Act 86, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2018, which appropriated \$1,000,000 to HTA – to be matched dollar for dollar by the private sector – to address homelessness in tourism and resort areas statewide. A total of 107 projects statewide were supported by Act 86 funding, with the following breakdown by island:

- Oahu: 55 projects (\$453,262.27)
- Kauai: 18 projects (\$100,405.85)
- Maui: 18 projects (\$307,684.02)
- Hawaii: 16 projects (\$138,647.86)

Act 86 (SLH 2018) project amounts funded by HTA ranged from a minimum of \$97.00 to a maximum of \$99,500.00, with the average HTA project award being \$9,346.00 per project. The projects included several statewide and island wide projects, which included general intake and referral for homeless services, support for abused children, home repair, food distribution, school supply distribution, a security patrol pilot project in Chinatown, and free dental services. A complete listing of projects funded by HTA through Act 86 can be viewed at:

<https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/homelessness-and-tourism-industry/>.

As new initiatives to address homelessness emerge in other sectors, it is important to develop shared metrics so that efforts can be consistently evaluated across multiple sectors and systems. It was difficult to evaluate the overall impact of the projects on reducing homelessness based on the reports submitted by the projects for Act 86 (SLH 2018). In addition, due to the small amount of the project awards, many projects reported numbers served by their larger organization rather than the number of people specifically served by the

funding that was provided. If HTA and HLTA were to consult with the HICH, the council could assist in identifying specific data points and metrics to more effectively evaluate the direct impact of HTA and HLTA funded projects on reducing homelessness or preventing homelessness. For example, data points could include the number of individuals placed into permanent housing, the average length of stay in homeless programs, the number of individuals residing in Hawaii for less than 12 months, and the number of individuals who increase household income. In addition, the council could assist in establishing aligned measures across different sectors.

The Coordinator notes that the proposed consultation with the HICH is consistent with the council's role of coordinating statewide planning and policy relating to homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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David Y. Ige
Governor

Chris Tatum
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
CHRIS TATUM

Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

AND

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Wednesday, March 11, 2020
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room #414

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL NO. 1945 HD1
RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Taniguchi, Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism, and the Committee on Human Services: the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) **supports** House Bill 1945 HD1, which allocates Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenues into the Tourism Special Fund and appropriates funds for HTA and the Hawai'i Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds.

HB1945 HD1 would help Hawai'i in its efforts to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas across the state. Homelessness is a major issue in Hawai'i, and it impacts both the visitor industry and our residents. We believe a coordinated and focused effort which provides resources and support to address homelessness is a proven approach. If this measure is passed, we will be able to work collaboratively with HLTA, the private sector and community to leverage funding that'll help to address homelessness in our tourist and resort areas, thereby creating a more positive experience for both our visitors and residents.

It is for these reasons that HTA **supports** HB1945 HD1. We appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1945, HD 1

TO: Chair Wakai, Vice-Chair Taniguchi, and Members of the
Senate Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism Committee

Chair Ruderman, Vice-Chair Rhoads, and Members of the
Senate Human Services Committee

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants, Development & Policy Manager

DATE: March 11, 2020 (2:45 PM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** HB 1945, HD 1, which would allocate transient accommodations tax (TAT) revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Tourism Authority and the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas subject to private matching funds.

HHRC works with many individuals who are impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those relating to substance use and underlying mental health conditions.

HHRC spearheaded efforts that formed the hui that produced Honolulu LEAD (law enforcement assisted diversion), a collaborative effort with the Honolulu Police Department and, hopefully one day, the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office to steer those who are unsheltered or unstably housed away from the criminal legal system and toward stable housing and needed medical care and social services.

[As the first-year LEAD evaluation has shown](#), intensive outreach and case management can yield beneficial results that would not otherwise be forthcoming in an approach that

emphasizes over-criminalization and over-incarceration. As noted by the editorial board of the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, “This kind of sustained outreach is an investment that ultimately yields lasting improvement in the lives of the chronically homeless, and saves public resources as well.” ([“Editorial: A New Approach to the Homeless,”](#) November 5, 2019)

LEAD has now expanded to the other major islands and we hope that the Legislature will continue to favorably view the program’s salutary impacts on underserved populations and the communities in which they live throughout the state.

HHRC remains grateful for the support provided by the HLTA last year, which helped fund these critical LEAD case management services. (Dan Nakaso, [“Funding Boosts Efforts to Reduce Chinatown Homelessness,”](#) *Honolulu Star-Advertiser*, July 25, 2019.) Without the funding received we would have been very hard-pressed to provide the level of case management necessary to move people into shelter and to facilitate their health and well-being.

We hope that continued TAT funding will be available to help supplement public efforts to provided needed outreach and case management services to the unsheltered and unstably housed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 304

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: TRANSIENT ACCOMODATIONS; Modify Earmarks

BILL NUMBER: HB 1945, HD-1

INTRODUCED BY: House Committees on Tourism and International Affairs and Human Services and Homelessness

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii tourism authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds. Requires HTA to report to the 2021 legislature. Earmarks in general decrease transparency and accountability, and should be avoided.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 237D-6.5, HRS, to add a new earmark on TAT revenues. Beginning on July 1, 2020, \$_____ shall be allocated to the tourism special fund; provided that the Hawaii tourism authority shall use the funds, in conjunction with the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas; provided further that no funds shall be released unless matched dollar-for-dollar by the private sector.

Requires a report to be submitted 20 days prior to the convening of the 2021 legislature.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009.

STAFF COMMENTS: As with any earmarking of revenues, the legislature will be preapproving each of the initiatives fed by the tax earmark, so expenses from the funds largely avoid legislative scrutiny, and the effectiveness of the programs funded becomes harder to ascertain. It is also difficult to determine whether too little or too much revenue has been diverted from other priorities in the state budget.

If the legislature deems the programs and purposes funded by this special fund to be a high priority, then it should maintain the accountability for these funds by appropriating the funds as it does with other programs. Earmarking revenues merely absolves elected officials from setting priorities. If the money were appropriated, lawmakers would have to evaluate the real or actual needs of each program.

Digested 2/16/2020

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Rick Collins, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Hawaii Student Television

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

Maui Youth and Family Services

Na Pu'uwai Molokai Native

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The Catalyst Group

March 9, 2020

To: Senator Glenn Wakai
And members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism

Senator Russell Ruderman, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Testimony in Support of HB 1945 HD 1 Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 1945 HD 1 Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax.

Specifically, HYSN supports the allocation of \$1,500,000 to address homelessness in tourism and resort areas. HYSN expresses no opinion on the other funding allocations in the bill.

For the past two years, HYSN has received funds from the Hawaii Tourism and Lodging Association that have supported professional development training for youth workers who provide services to runaway and homeless youth. The funds also provide a portion of the non-federal matching funds required for our federal grants that support outreach, emergency shelter and transitional living services to youth ages 12 – 21. Currently, these grants bring in \$550,000 per year in federal funds to help the most vulnerable segment of our homeless population – our children and youth.

On behalf of the homeless children and youth and their families who will benefit from this initiative, we ask for your support on HB 1945.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1945 HD1: RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX

TO: Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair; Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair; and Members, Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, and Human Services

FROM: Rob Van Tassel, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: **Wednesday, March 11, 2020; 2:45 PM; CR 414**

Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman, and Members, Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, and Human Services

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in support HB 1945 HD1**, which would allocate TAT revenues to the tourism special fund and appropriate funds to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas. I am Rob Van Tassel, with Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii.

This bill helps fill gaps statewide in homeless services in tourist areas, while requiring that the local service providers provide a 1-to-1 match of their grant. For example, in 2019, Catholic Charities Hawaii's Big Island program received a \$40,000 grant which they matched by obtaining community support from Catholic parishes to participate in the local Charity Walk. They even creatively organized a Pastors' Challenge. This leveraging of funds is an important part of this bill. Local communities must support these homeless services in order to obtain these grants. Kauai and Maui also received grants to help address homelessness on their islands.

CCH gap services provided include deposits, rent, back due utilities, etc. as well as items not usually available from homeless programs such as baby and adult diapers (needed for health as well as dignity), baby supplies, transportation coupons/tickets, etc. Move-in kits and mattresses and bedding when families move into permanent housing are also in demand. For example, one young couple from Kona was homeless with a 2 week old baby. The mother had a C-section birth and was still recuperating from this surgery. Seeing this family at the Convoy of Hope event, CCH and HOPE Services staff collaborated on the spot to find safe shelter for them. They were temporarily sheltered on cots in a transitional home while waiting for space in the Kihei Pua Family Shelter in Hilo. Ultimately, the family was housed in transitional housing back in Kona. CCH was able to use the ACT 86 funds to help fill this family's basic needs including transportation, critical baby supplies (diapers, formula, bottles, etc.) as well as food until they were placed. Families can be moved from unsheltered living to housing with some interim help.

We urge your support for HB 1945 HD1 and **\$1.5 million to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas.** If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 373-0356, or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org.





Friends of the Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii

P. O. Box 6908 ▲ Hilo, HI 96720
Bus: (808) 935-8755 ▲ Fax: (808) 935-8757

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Stephanie Oshiro, President
Robin Benedict, Program Coordinator
Friends of the Children's Justice Center of East Hawaii
808-935-8755
P.O Box 6908, Hilo, HI 96720

Wednesday, March 9, 2020

Our organization focus is on meeting the needs of documented abused and neglected children in East Hawaii, and striving to make our public aware of child abuse and child abuse prevention. We work together with community agencies, as the last resource for these children. We strive to ease family stress and give children a sense of normalcy. We have received funding from the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association. Homeless situations are captured in the narrative of our "Special Needs Request" forms. We have frequent requests for beds, bedding, clothing, hygiene items, services and items to meet medical needs, structured care programs, and intercession activities for children who are homeless or in shelter. In some instances, parents are looking for work so that they can find stable housing, and in other cases on the verge of homelessness because of lost employment, or even a homeless teen on the streets, who is a victim of abuse.

Passing HB 1945 would allow continued funding, to meet the critical frontline efforts, which combat homelessness on a daily basis.

This is a story of a single father caring for his young children and in shelter. We were able to pay for a summer program for the children so that he could seek employment and find stable housing.

This is a story about a homeless family living on pallets. We were able to provide warm clothing for an asthmatic child and a tarp to replace the wall where the child was sleeping, to keep the child safe and warm.

This is a story about a homeless teenager, who did in-kind services for food and shelter. We were able to work with the school counselor to make sure he had clothing, footwear, school uniforms, and school supplies so that he could finish his last year in high school. He graduated and went on to vocational training.

In all these stories listed above, we partnered with other local community agencies working directly with children and families, as they had exhausted all other resources to meet the requested emergency or special need. When making your decision on HB 1945 please consider the huge positive impact on our homeless community and making a difference.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Oshiro
FCJC-EH / President

Robin Benedict
FCJC-EH / Program Coordinator



Adult Friends for Youth

"Redirecting lives to stop Violence"

Testimony on House Bill No. 1945

Presented to Committee Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman
And Members of the Committee on Tourism & International Affairs
March 9, 2020

By Deborah Spencer-Chun
President & CEO, Adult Friends for Youth

Aloha, I am in strong support of House Bill 1945 Section (1) that allocates funds to Hawaii Tourism Authority in conjunction with Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Associates to implement initiatives to address homelessness in Tourist and Resort areas. There is an urgent need to address the homeless situation in these areas because it eventually leads to crime, drugs and violence against visiting tourists. Despite regular sweeps conducted by HPD, this situation has not deterred the homeless from returning. Adult Friends for Youth has worked with over 50 homeless youth and young adults and continues to follow up in responding to their needs. Many have families and friends who are also homeless and in desperate need of food and shelter. I know this situation will not go away unless we do something about it. It is a topic that has been talked about for years and yet very little to show for it. Promoting Hawaii as a beautiful tourist destination can be hindered when homelessness is visible and disregarded. These allocated funds can support the efforts of many to help make a difference in combating the homeless epidemic here in our islands. There is beauty all around when we take care of these needs. It becomes a win, win situation for everyone when we take care of our own.

There are many individuals and families who depend on us to make the right decisions. I sincerely hope we don't let them down.

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HB1945 HD1

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In Memoriam

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To: COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
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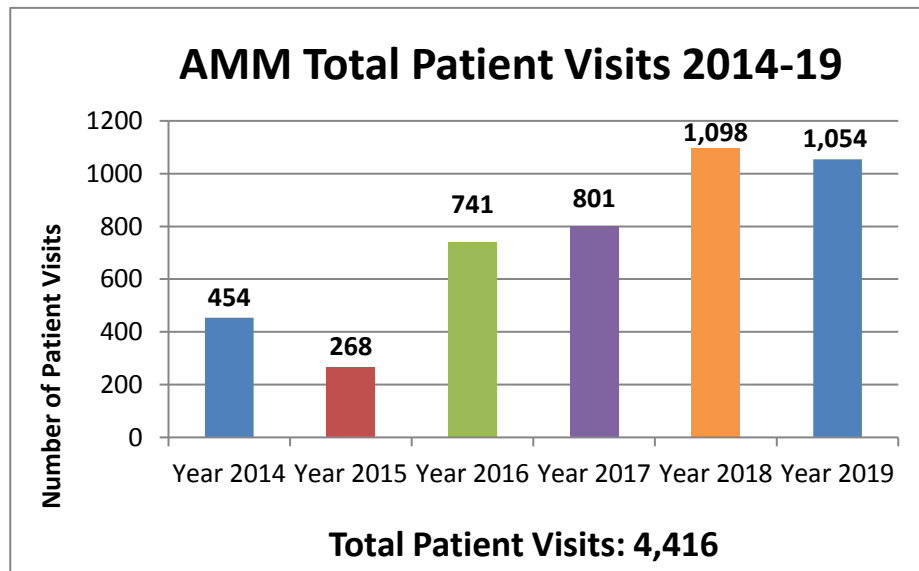
Date: March 10, 2020

Organization Name: Aloha Medical Mission
Program Name: Clinic & Outreach

Aloha, I am Jocelyn Kimura of the Aloha Medical Mission, Hawaii's Only No-Cost Dental Clinic.

We are in favor of House Bill HB 1945 HD1.

The Aloha Medical Mission is home to Hawaii's Only No-Cost Dental Clinic. We serve the 30 percent of the state population that lacks dental insurance and care for about 120 patients a month.



For the houseless, dental care is not usually a priority, which can lead to tooth decay; gum disease; and other health issues. The mouth is the gateway to the body's health! An unhealthy mouth may increase the risk of serious health problems such as heart attack; stroke; poorly controlled diabetes; and preterm labor. We fill the healthcare void by providing FREE interim basic care: including oral examinations; x-rays; fillings; cleanings; extractions; and limited root canals.



The opportunity to see a dental provider brings the patient pain relief and comfort and can allow them to make improvements in their lives as they gain confidence with better oral health. The increase in confidence brings back their smiles and self-esteem. Self-esteem is vital to living a happier and healthier life.

In 2019, this funding assisted the dental program to see 1,054 patients and provide \$855,000 in in-kind dental services. We were honored to have the support of the State and the Visitor Industry Charity Walk's matching program.

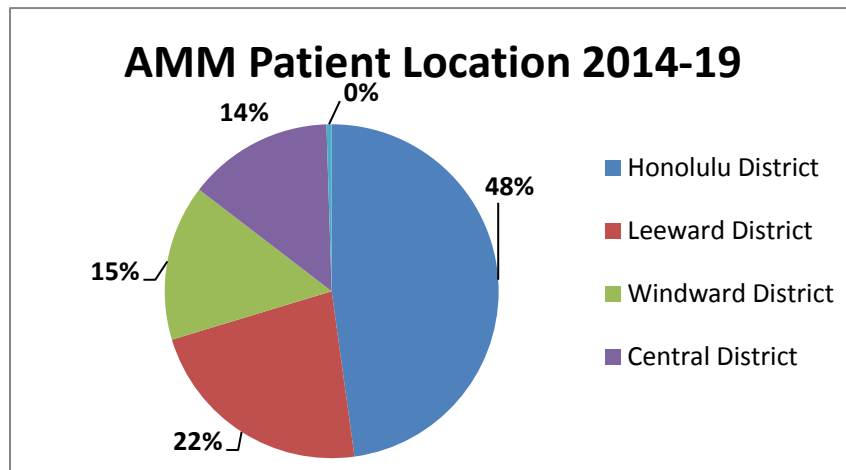
In conclusion, your support of HB 1945 HD1 will allow programs like ours to continue to reach the houseless one by one, offering a change in their oral healthcare that can affect their personal outlook. We, at the Aloha Medical Mission, are committed to improve the lives and the smiles of the underserved and uninsured in our communities.



Outreach Work



Homeless Partnership



Mahalo for your consideration and the opportunity!

Jocelyn Kimura
(808) 380-7668



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Founded in 1865

William Booth
Founder

Brian Peddle
General

Kenneth G. Hodder
Territorial Commander

Jeffrey Martin
Eloisa Martin
Divisional Leaders

The Salvation Army

Hawaiian & Pacific Islands Division

Testimony of
Elizabeth O. Kim

Director of Corporate Engagement & Government Relations
The Salvation Army, Hawaiian & Pacific Islands Division

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TOURISM/HUMAN SERVICES

March 11, 2020, 2:45 p.m.

In consideration of
H.B. 1945,

Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax

The Salvation Army, Hawaiian & Pacific Islands Division, submits the following impact testimony on H.B. 1945, which proposes to appropriate funds to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas. Passage of this bill will boost current chronic homelessness efforts, helping to sustain progress that has already been achieved by the state, city, county, and non-profit homeless providers. If left unaddressed, persistent homelessness in these public, highly visible areas could have a negative impact on the rate of tourists and visitors staying in the resort areas, resulting in a negative trickle-down effect on our local families that benefit from employment in the hospitality industry. According to the Aloha United Way's ALICE Report, businesses catering to domestic and international tourists contribute 21% to our state's economy and provide employment to about half of Hawaii residents. Any shift in employment or loss of work hours due to a decrease in business in this industry will unfortunately be felt first by those who are already struggling. As you may know, the mission of The Salvation Army is to serve those who are the most in need, without discrimination. We believe H.B. 1945 not only addresses the issue of homelessness directly, but also has a positive impact on important economic drivers that help keep our workers fully employed.

The Salvation Army's Pathway of Hope Family Services Office, a member of Partners in Care, has been a frontline provider of homeless financial assistance, food, and clothing in Hawaii since 1987. We also provide assistance to those who are at 30-50% of the area median income, many of whom are in the hospitality and service industries.

The Family Services Office receives both public and private funds to help at-risk households that depend on service jobs. We are grateful for the financial support we have received from the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association's matching grant program. The funding has enabled The Salvation Army, through the Pathway of Hope's Family Services Office, to operate a hub where financial aid, food, clothing, and resources are provided to the homeless and families at-risk of homelessness.

Thank you.



Aloha United Way
Hawaii Island United Way
Kauai United Way
Maui United Way

Our AUW Designation
Number is 96450

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Connect via email: info@hopeserviceshawaii.org

HOPE Help Line: 808-935-3050

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1945: RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawaii, Inc.
Hearing: Wednesday, 3/11/20; 2:45 pm; Room 414

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **testimony in support of HB 1945**, which allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii tourism authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds.

For the last two years, we have received matching funds from donations solicited during the Hawaii Island Charity Walk, as a result of this allocation. The Charity Walk is a significant fundraiser for us, as private donors are more motivated to give when they know their donation will go further. Beyond that, the Charity Walk gives us a chance to be present with our donors and supporters, as well as to build bridges with the resort and tourism community.

As tourism is the state’s largest industry, and the lack of affordable housing is arguably its largest problem, a relationship between the industry and service providers is important if we are to work together toward a solution. By partnering on such events, we can build an understanding of the relationship between tourism and homelessness, and a commitment to making housing affordable for all of our local residents.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of our comments **in support of HB 1945**.

Sincerely,

Brandee Menino,
Chief Executive Officer

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY



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March 10, 2020

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
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Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism

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Senate Committee on Human Services

Support of HB 1945, HD1 Relating to TRANSIENT ACCOMODATIONS TAX (TAT) (Allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds. Requires HTA to report to the 2021 legislature. Effective 7/1/2099. [HD1])

EET/HMS Hrg: Wednesday, March 11, 2020, at 2:45 p.m., in Conf. Rm. 414

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of HB 1945, HD 1**, which allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the HTA and HLTA to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds and requires HTA to report to the 2021 legislature.

Homelessness is a major issue in Hawaii that impacts the visitor industry and residents. The collaborative effort between HTA and HLTA would allow the private and public sectors to leverage TAT and private funding that will help address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, thereby creating more positive experiences for visitors, residents and the homeless.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports HB 1945, HD1** and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.

Dear Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman and members of the committee:

The outreach program, Mobile Munchies, is fully in favor of House Bill 1945 to provide much needed assistance to Hawaii's tourist industry to help our homeless population. Mobile Munchies is an outreach of Kauai Lihue Lutheran church, providing a nourishing meal to those children and adults on Kauai who may go hungry. Every week the program provides lunches for homeless on the island.

In tandem with feeding our needy, the support given to such programs also lifts our entire community and economy. Homelessness can create an uncomfortable feeling for our visitors, as it can show our community is failing to care for its people. Homelessness affects all areas of the island; it shows when some of the homeless need to beg or rob in areas our visitors shop, eat, and stay. Also, homeless camps/tents send an unpleasant sight spoiling the image of beautiful Kauai.

Our brown bag program helps to give our homeless families the food they need, so they will not be hungry and feel the need to steal or beg from our visitors. This helps make island tourists feel safe in areas they want to see and stay on Kauai. Many of the families here on the island work for the visitor industry and many of their children take part in the Boys and Girls program who we also serve. In part, many of the visitors to our island also help support the Mobile Munchies program while they are here.

Any help our State's leadership gives to our tourist industries to provide for the basic needs of the State's homeless will go a long way to lifting our needy and improve the quality of life in Hawaii.

March 10, 2020

Aloha Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman, and members of the committees:

My name is Lieutenant Raghel Santiago and I am the Corps Officer/Pastor for The Salvation Army in Kona, alongside with my husband Lieutenant Jose Santiago. While the Kona Salvation Army provides free programs from free music lessons, afterschool youth programs, and for the low income families, I am writing to tell you of our programs that allows me to proudly say I support the House Bill 1945, which is specifically for the Homelessness Matching funds.

The Kona Salvation Army has a food pantry that we open to the community every Tuesday and Thursday for those that need some bags of food from our pantry. Likewise, we offer our food pantry for emergency food all week long. 85% of the people that come to get food from us are transients and those that are homeless. We serve over 120 people weekly with our food pantry program. Our other homeless program is our feeding program (Share A Meal aka SAM) that we do every Thursday evenings. We serve 225 people a warm meal, which 90% are homeless. Aside from serving a nutritious meal to the people, we offer them hope. We help them look for jobs, offer assistance in helping them write resumes, fill out applications, offer clothing and hygiene products to boost their self-esteem, and encourage them to take the task they need to search and apply for the job openings. In the 2 ½ years we have been doing our SAM program, 12 people have gotten employment and are no longer living in the streets. Five people who are no longer homeless are volunteering at our thrift store and our food pantry as a way to give back.

Receiving the funding to support our positive programs is much appreciated. Because of the matching funds, we are able to receive more money, which benefits our programs greatly and allows us to do the most good helping those in need in our community. Hope is what people need to get back on their feet, and I hope that you would reconsider approving this bill that would allow to match funds raised for the sole purpose of supporting our homeless programs. Mahalo for your time.

Best regards,

Raghel Santiago, Lieutenant

Corps Officer/ Pastor

The Salvation Army Kona Corps

75-223 Kalani Street

Kailua-Kona, HI 96740-1834

Office # (808)326-2330



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March 9, 2020

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
The Honorable Russell Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Hearing on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 2:45 p.m., Conference Room #414
Regarding HB 1945, HD1, "A Bill for an Act Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax"

Dear Chair Wakai and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism and
Chair Ruderman and Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services,

I ask that you would **strongly support HB 1945, HD1** to allocate revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriate funds for the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds.

Since 1997 Partners in Development Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity has served over 110,000 of at-risk children and families including homeless through its nine programs across the state. PIDF has benefitted from participating in the Visitor Industry Charity Walk and receiving funds from the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association for over five years. These funds have been critical in supporting our Ka Pa'alana Homeless Family Education Program, Tutu and Me Traveling Preschool, Ke Kama Pono Safehouse for adjudicated male teens, We Are Oceania Micronesians support program, and Hui Ho 'omalua statewide foster family program. Without funds such as these, we could not provide the many services that we do for those most needy to positively impact our state.

I humbly and strongly ask that you support HB 1945, HD1.

Me ke aloha,

Jan E. Hanohano Dill
President

Serving Hawai'i's Families, Living Hawaiian Values



March 10, 2020

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Russell Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development and
Tourism
Senate Committee Members of the Committee on Human Services

RE: Hearing on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 2:45pm, Conference Room 414
Regarding HB 1945, HD1 Relation to the Transient Accommodations Tax

Dear Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman, and Members of the Senate,

On behalf of Making Ends Meet, I write in support of **HB 1945, HD1**, which allocates Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenues into the Tourism Special Fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) and the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) in an effort to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds.

Making Ends Meet (MEM) is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit consisting of 7 volunteers. Since 2008, we have provided emergency financial assistance to individuals and families who have experienced a traumatic or unforeseen experience. Many Hawaii residents live paycheck-to-paycheck therefore one financial setback can have devastating consequences. As such, our mission is to encourage self-sufficiency and independence by providing emergency financial assistance. By doing so, we have assisted many individuals from experiencing the consequences of financial disaster, including homelessness.

The grant awarded to us from the HLTA Charity Walk, which included the matched funds, has gone directly to our award recipients. The HLTA grant allocation process ensures that the matched funds are distributed appropriately. This coordinated effort has allowed for both large and small nonprofits like MEM to equally compete for funding. As such, I **humbly and strongly ask that you support HB 1945, HD1.**

If you have additional questions, please contact me at (808) 485-2505.

Sincerely,

Sherrie M. Takushi-Isara
Executive Director

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March 10, 2020

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Alaka'ina Foundation

Tim von Herrmann

TPH Consulting

To Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman, and members of the EET/HMS and WAM Committees

Re: Support of Bill 1945

I am writing today to express my support of HB1945, intended to allocate TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriate funds for the Hawaii tourism authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas.

Tourism is arguably the largest business sector in Hawaii. Homeless and affordable housing is arguably the largest challenge facing the state. To that end, support of this bill allows the strength of this revenue to be directed towards sustainable solutions. Solutions provided by the organizations that the HTA and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association support.

With their support, our organization will complete 8 homes this year on Oahu providing not only shelter, but permanent housing for 8 families faced with overcrowding, high rental and the danger of becoming homeless. The hidden homeless are often the most vulnerable of our population but have the greatest potential for recovery through the work of nonprofits like us and the support of bills like HB1945.

Mahalo,

Jim Murphy
Executive Director
808-538-7373

922 Austin Lane #C-1 Honolulu,
HI 96817

(808) 538-7070 Tel
(808) 538-7171 Fax

www.honoluluhabitat.org

FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN'S JUSTICE CENTER OF OAHU
3019 Pali Highway
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Date: 03/10/2020

To: Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman, and members of the committee

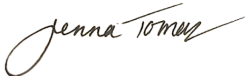
Subject: HB1945, Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax

Hearing Date, Time & Location: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 414

My name is Jenna Tomas, Program Director for Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Oahu. We are in strong support of HB1945.

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Oahu (FCJCO) is the nonprofit partner of the Children's Justice Center of Oahu. We support local child victims of sexual abuse, physical abuse, sex trafficking, and witnesses to violent crime. We also assist children who have been severely neglected or exposed to drugs. Many of the families that we assist are struggling with poverty. Our organization assists these financially strapped families to help prevent them from becoming homeless, or assist them in escaping homelessness. By providing essential and basic needs for children we can lessen a family's financial burden. We also help provide basic needs for child victims of abuse residing in homeless shelters. Providing assistance to these children in the form of items such as clothing and toiletries, music lessons, or funds for extracurricular activities impacts our community by helping children who have been harmed, heal and become more resilient. Positive outcomes lead to children developing into healthy and contributing members of the community.

In closing, we are in strong support of HB1945 and ask for your assistance in its passing during this legislative session. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 808-445-1873.



Jenna Tomas
Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Oahu
808-445-1873, 3019 Pali Highway Honolulu, HI 96817



March 10, 2020

Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Taniguchi and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, as well as Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony *in support of* HB 1945, which allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds.

Hawaii Foodbank Kauai provides service to 13,000 Kauai residents, distributing more than 1.3 million pounds of food annually. As a state network, Hawaii Foodbank Oahu and Kauai, Maui Food Bank and The Food Basket on Hawaii Island, distributed 16.6 million pounds of food in 2019 to those faced with food insecurity.

Last year, Hawaii Foodbank Oahu & Kauai purchased 10% of the food we distributed. In past years, we have been beneficiaries of HLTA's Charity Walk. With the funding we received on Kauai, we were able to provide items such as backpacks, flashlights, toiletries, rain jackets and socks to create fully packed care packages and were provided to 90 people on Kauai who identified as homeless. In addition, we were able to utilize some of the funding towards Kauai's non-CDL truck of which we were very much in need of.

We are grateful for support that this funding provides to serve those in need.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Wes Perreira
Hawaii Foodbank Kauai
Director





March 10, 2020

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Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Taniguchi and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, as well as Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony *in support of* HB 1945, which allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HLTA) to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds.

Hawaii Foodbank regularly provides food to 1 in 8 Hawaii residents each year, approximately 12.5% of the state's population (almost 59,000 households). Last year, we distributed over 12 million pounds of food on Oahu (10.7 million) and Kauai (1.3 million), a majority of which was donated (89%). Although majority of the families we serve are working families, we also work to serve the houseless population with the help of our partner agencies.

Last year, Hawaii Foodbank Oahu & Kauai purchased 10% of the food we distributed. In past years, we have been beneficiaries of HLTA's Charity Walk. With the funding we received on Oahu, we were able to provide hot meals, bags of food and/or shelter in Ala Moana and Waikiki districts serving over 15,000 people.

We are grateful for support that this funding provides to serve those in need.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

With much respect and aloha,

Ron Mizutani
Hawaii Foodbank
President and Chief Executive Officer

Marielle Terbio
Hawaii Foodbank
Director of Community Engagement & Advocacy



HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 11:45:05 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
"Phil" Augustus Acosta	Testifying for Aloha Harvest	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai & Ruderman, and Vice Chair Taniguchi & Rhoads,

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB1945.

At Aloha Harvest, we strive to create a more efficient and equitable food system. By collecting and redistributing food that would otherwise be discarded, we are able to feed more than 56,000 of Hawaii's hungry individuals and families annually (including the homeless), while reducing the effects of food waste to the environment and our economy. This year, as we celebrate our 20th year anniversary, we are proud to say that we have rescued over 23 million pounds of food from going into the waste stream. We could not have done that without the help of over 1,000 food donors, over 300 partner agencies, and our generous funders.

As tourism continues to be an integral part of Hawaii's economy, and the State having one of the highest per capita rate of homelessness, the unsheltered people on the streets of Waikiki, Ala Moana and other well-visited areas certainly has a significant effect on the industry and the tourists' overall experience. This has been a constant concern with Legislators, and residents alike, and the discussions on what to do about the issue has polarized the community.

Fortunately, there are many non-profit organizations and civic clubs who are dedicated to help the hungry, needy, and homeless. Many with a specific focus in the Metro Honolulu and Waikiki areas. Aloha Harvest is proud to be a key partner in helping these organizations fulfill their mission by providing quality food, free of charge. This allows the NGOs to focus on what they do best, working with those in need to get them off the streets and back on their feet, while also helping their bottom line. In addition, Aloha Harvest works with many restaurants, grocery stores, and businesses in these areas, providing cost savings in disposal fees and tax savings. We are working together to build a more sustainable and resilient community, which is necessary for a thriving tourism industry.

The funds we have received through HLTA and the Visitor Industry Charity Walk, along with the matching funds from the State have been a tremendous help in allowing us to maintain our operations, assist the most vulnerable in our community, and spread the

word about our mission to Waste Less and Feed More. We urge this joint committee to pass HB1945 relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax. Thank you.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 1:07:54 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Deges	Testifying for Hawaii Island HIV/AIDS Foundation	Support	Yes

Comments:

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 1:43:34 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stephanie P. Donoho	Testifying for Kohala Coast Resort Association	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 1:44:53 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marlene Rice	Testifying for Maui Food Bank	Support	No

Comments:

The Maui Food Bank is Maui County's primary safety net for hunger relief. Currently, we serve over 10,000 people a month. Of those served 40% are children and youth. Many of those who receive safe and nutritious food from the Food Bank are comprised of persons who are homeless. The extra funding that we receive from HB1945 makes it possible for the Maui Food Bank to continue its mission to help the hungry in Maui County.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 2:00:22 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Madeline Powell	Testifying for Keiki Cupboard	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman and Members of the Committees,

I am representing Keiki Cupboard, a non profit here on Maui. We are an organization that has set up "cupboards" in all of the public schools on Maui in order to collect, purchase and distribute school supplies to the neediest and more importantly, the homeless students in Maui County. We started out over 10 years ago with only 2 schools and have been able to expand to include not only Maui public schools but now we send supplies to Molokai & Lanai.

We were fortunate to receive matching grant funds from HLTA because of our participation in the annual Visitor Industry Charity Walk for 2018 & 2019. With these funds we have been able to supplement our funds to purchase school supplies, hygiene items, shoes, slippers and special requests of teaching tools. Our "cupboards" are located on each individual school campus, with an administator in charge to identify specific students in need. We have no specific numbers as to how many needy and homelss students that we help, but if they are attending school we know that they have access to the supplies without any "red tape" or shame. The extra funds that we have received from HLTA has been a God send and we can not say Mahalo enough to them for the extra help!

with much Aloha,

Madeline Powell

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 2:40:52 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carla Houser	Testifying for RYSE (Residential Youth Services & Empowerment)	Support	No

Comments:

RYSE (Residential Youth Services & Empowerment) strongly supports this bill and the intent to allocate \$1,500,000 (to be matched dollar for dollar by private funds) to the tourism special fund and to ensure that Hawaii Tourism Authority shall use the funds, in conjunction with the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony!

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 2:59:59 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shirley David	Testifying for St. Michael the Archangel Church, Kailua Kona	Support	No

Comments:

Each year parishioners at St. Michael the Archangel Church donate funds and participate in the Visitors Industry Charity Walk for the benefit of Catholic Charities Hawaii. These funds and matching grants from the Visitors Industry are used to give a hand up to those who are on the verge of homelessness due to a family member illness, job loss, addiction, natural disaster or other causes. The funds from Charity Walk grants and the grants funded by from the legislature last year have made a huge difference to our most vulnerable population on Hawaii Island. Please continue your support by funding Hawaii Statutes section 201 (b) 11 again this year.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 6:31:23 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
dr. mary trotto	Testifying for Hale Kau Kau	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

I would like to testify in favor of HB 1945

As a non profit preparing meals every day and serving both the homeless and the homebound population in South Maui, this fund is very important. When the homeless, and the houseless (those living in their cars) come to Hale Kau Kau for a meal, they can also avail themselves of Social Services. Programs that help the homeless get healthcare, jobs and temporary shelters all come to Hale Kau Kau to be available to all who come to the kitchen for a hot meal. We are serving between 40-80 meals each evening from the kitchen, We have been doing this for 28 years, 7 days a week. We can do this program because of the generosity of many. Our budget is currently around \$400,000 As a non profit, we must raise that amount of money every year. Any support that can be given to feed the homeless in South Maui would be very much appreciated. Please vote yes on HB1945

Dr Mary Trotto

Secretary on the Board of Hale Kau Kau, Kihei Hi 96753

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 10:22:48 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
CURTIS TSUZAKI	Testifying for Corvette Center Ministries	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am the Founder and President of Corvette Center Ministries, a 501 c (3) organization in the state of Hawaii that helps homeless with housing and programs. I have been receiving state money through HB 1945 for two years which has enabled my organization to create three homes for homeless men and women. Without the funds we would not have been able to do the kind of work we do, which involves housing the homeless and providing mentorship and work programs. In the past year and a half we have helped six men and women who had formerly been homeless. We provide outreach programs to the homeless living on the streets and parks and also partner with other transitional shelters and drug rehab programs which assist the homeless We work with two local businesses who provide vocational training and also encourage our clients with micro business ventures. We also partner with local churches. Our clients can stay up to a year in which time they can become sustainable and pay for affordable housing either in our network or elsewhere. HB 1945 will allow Corvette Center Ministries to continue to offer low cost housing to the homeless and step up efforts to take the homeless directly off the beaches and parks where they currently reside, which has a direct impact on the tourism industry. Please give your support for HB 1945.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 12:31:28 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Connie Mitchell	Testifying for IHS, The Institute for Human Services	Support	No

Comments:

IHS, The Institute for Human Services strongly supports this bill that supports the allocation of \$1,500,000 (to be matched dollar for dollar by private funds) to the tourism special fund established by section 201B-II; provided that the Hawaii Tourism Authority shall use the funds, in conjunction with the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association, to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas.

Resort districts have a unique profile of homelessness that pose an economic threat to our visitor industry and residents who live in those districts on each island. Homeless services providers like IHS are eager to respond to the needs of our community. Our efforts have included using grants awarded by the HLTA to

1) convene a stakeholder meeting to develop a comprehensive Waikiki program to address homelessness that focuses on chronically homeless persons with Mental illness and substance abuse

2) continue a responsible Repatriation Program that assisted nearly 200 people return to a place of meaningful support in the past year. A return "home" close to family , friends or social service systems that were familiar to them. In any case, half of each airline ticket is paid for by the individual being relocated, matched with funds IHS provides.

3) launch a weekly evening outreach event in Waikiki in partnership with other agencies like Waikiki Health, Project Vision, the VA and Revive and Refresh that has consistently drawn 60-80 people each time augmenting our regular outreach efforts during the day. The event provides an opportunity for many to experience a hot shower, enjoy a

hot meal, receive urgent care including dressing changes and medication refills, receive help with virtual documents, applications for employment, transport to shelter and more.

4) establish a strong partnership with HPD to help identify vulnerable homeless individuals or those who could benefit from access to treatment.

Other non-profits have focused on unaccompanied youth which are often drawn to "party" areas who are also vulnerable to being trafficked or drawn into the illegal drug scene. So much more needs to be done. We hope that the Legislature will see fit to allocate the funding to continue these types of programs that cannot be delivered without the designated request being made.

I also want to underscore the fact that all these funds are distributed statewide to numerous homeless service providers that deliver services in resort areas, not just Oahu.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 9:55:31 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bob Marchant	Testifying for River of Life Mission/Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Assc.	Support	No

Comments:

There are many reasons for homelessness. However, many times people are looking for one solution. To solve a many faceted problem we need many solutions. One of those solutions is job training. River of Life Mission has been the recipient of grants to support our culinary program. They supply needed funds to support such a program that gives needed job skills to homeless individuals. The state has matched the funds for the last two years of HLTA charity walk grant funding. We support this bill to continue the program that helps homeless individuals become self sustaining members of the community.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 10:55:10 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kauai Food Bank Inc.	Testifying for Kauai Independent Food Bank	Support	No

Comments:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION OF 2020

Committee on Tourism and International Affairs

Committee on Human services and Homelessness

Kelvin Moniz, Executive Director of Kauai Food Bank Inc. DBA: Kauai Independent Food Bank

3285 Waapa Rd, Lihue, HI 96766 (808) 246-3809

HB1945, Transient Accommodation Tax, 9:00 am at Wednesday, February 12, 2020.

Kaua'i Food Bank Inc. is in full support of Transient Accommodation Tax (TAT) revenues bill, via a tourism special fund, to generate and appropriate funds to be used by the Hawaii tourism authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association (HL & TA) to address homelessness on Kauai occurring in tourist and resort areas (-subject to private matching funds).

Kaua'i Food Bank Inc. has a long standing history of providing food and household goods to homeless individuals. We have worked in partnership with the Hawaii Tourism Authority in the past and value the work they do to address homelessness occurring on Kaua'i in our tourist and resort areas. Kaua'i Food Bank Inc. agrees that homelessness has a negative impact on the experience tourists have when visiting Kaua'i. Issues of concern are aesthetics, such as the cleanliness of public bathrooms, and the increased risk to the health and safety of tourists when homeless individuals are seeking accommodations, or money, and choose to occupy areas that are shared with the public. Kaua'i Food Bank Inc. provides food and goods to homeless individuals, and provides supplies and foods to partnering agencies that directly feed, and/or house, homeless individuals. Kaua'i Food bank Inc. knows that local organizations and efforts that provide services to meet the needs of homeless individuals reduces the need for homeless to occupy public spaces, especially tourist areas, and/or approach or harass tourists.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 11:38:50 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Max Tornai	Testifying for Habitat for Humanity Maui, Inc.	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman, and other members of the EET and HMS Committees,

My name is Max Tornai. I'm testifying on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Maui in support of HB1945 HD1 - especially Section 2.6. (pertaining to matching funds to be used to address homelessness in tourist or resort areas). I work at Habitat for Humanity Maui as development director, and we have been fortunate enough to receive similar matching funds for the past two fiscal years.

Habitat Maui is currently finishing 10 new homes in Lahaina and we have plans for 25 more new homes in Hana - both areas that experience heavy tourism-related traffic and are highly visible to a large number of visitors from around the world. Lahaina specifically has an acute homeless problem, and both Lahaina and Hana are suffering from affordable housing shortages. Many residents (in Hana especially) are dealing with extreme overcrowding. We regularly hear from Hana residents who share with us that there are households where full families are residing in each bedroom; where a 4 bedroom house will have over 20 people permanently living in it. These situations are unacceptable and unsafe on a number of different levels.

Habitat Maui also operates a Homeownership & Financial Literacy course, which is a HUD-approved curriculum guiding participants in how to budget effectively, improve their credit and credit scores, and make smart monetary decisions to become financially self-sufficient - and ultimately homeowner ready.

Additionally, Habitat Maui has coordinated Disaster Relief efforts and materials for families that became homeless due to fires or flooding (most notably for those in Lahaina who lost everything in fires during Hurricane Lane in 2018). Over the past two fiscal years, these funds have come through at critical times. Please consider supporting HB1945 HD1.

Mahalo,

Max Tornai

Development Director

Habitat for Humanity Maui

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 11:41:03 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Gregory Poole	Testifying for Ohana Christian Fellowship	Comments	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Wakai, Chair Ruderman and members of the Committee

My name is Greg Poole and I am Pastor of Ohana Christian Fellowship. We are a local church that has been on Kauai for over 20 years and have seen first hand the devastation of our neighbors homeless and feeling hopeless. Your funding is making a difference. In fact we have seen success in two of Kauai's homeless/addicted and mentally unhealthy boarding planes and departing the island to be reunited with family and seek treatment on the mainland just this past week. I have personally delivered both individuals to the airport and seen them depart. It's one person at a time but it is happening. Without your funding Ohana Christian Fellowship (OCF) could not have been able to work with and aide the many that we have had the privilege of walking beside. With your matching funding and in partnership with the Tourism Board, other agencies and the State I believe the impact over the last 12 months has been deep. As a State we are moving closer and closer to understanding the very complicated and difficult situation for the good of all parties. OCF is willing but we need support. Your funding is imperative to help continue the work that has begun. We believe it's the relationships and trust that once established allow us to truly be of value and assistance to the troubled individual or family. We have seen so many success stories as well. In fact a known drug dealer and mother that hadn't washed clothes in 7 years was reunited with her mother this past December. Her mother says it best, "she is sleeping in new warm pjs, cozy socks all warmed up, you helped save a child of God...my child." In Roman's 12:1, the Bible records these words "do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." A community that knows that there are people that care and that the State cares will become a healthy, safe community. This program is a testament to what we all and the State should be doing for all citizens and visitors. This is a great program. The program and funding is making a difference. I could share many success stories that are genuine and continue to improve our surroundings for all. They are occurring 1 person and 1 family at a time. Please feel free to give me a call and I would be honored to share first hand what I have witnessed, heard and seen with my own eyes. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for caring, doing your part and I want to suggest if we will keep the teamwork and partnership together this will be a problem of the past in the very near future. Mahalos and Blessings, Gregory Poole, Pastor Ohana Christian Fellowship

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2020 10:57:55 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Regina Gregory	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Needs a definition of "address" homelessness, otherwise it just means removing homeless people for aesthetic purposes. Given that competing with tourists is a major factor in homelessness, it would be appropriate for the TAT to be used for actual housing programs.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/8/2020 2:33:37 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support. Can we do more to get all parties to work together and actually solve some problems instead of pushing them around the islands?

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 11:15:56 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Elizabeth Murph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 3:52:35 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Catherine M. Butler	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Kauai North Shore Food Pantry is strongly in support of this bill. Our island of Kauai has many homeless families we are doing our best to provide what is needed. I'm confident that our senate will support this Bill.

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2020 4:17:11 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thelma Akita-Kealoha	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am asking for your support to pass HB 1945. I feel this bill is important to help our families who are struggling and living paycheck to paycheck remain in their homes when they have a financial emergency.

I work with people everyday looking for housing bacuse the rental market is so tight and very expensive; tenants are being evicted because they are paying way more for housing than they can afford and when they have any kind of emergency they find themselves making a decision that could lead to them being evicted or homeless.

I appreciate that his funding will keep people in their homes and not become homeless. Thank you for your support.

Thelma Akita-Kealoha

Aloha Maui Legislators!

As a constituent and former program director of the only daily soup kitchen in Maui County, I want to voice my support for House Bill 1945. This effort to help the homeless in concentrated tourist areas such as South Maui comes at a critical time in feeding hundreds of homeless individuals and families in our communities.

For background, Hale Kau Kau has never, ever missed a night of service since we opened on August 11, 1991. Our best estimate is that we have distributed about 1.5 million meals in 28 consecutive years; or 10,000-plus days. We have mostly fed the homeless and less fortunate in South Maui. Today, Hale Kau Kau feeds the homeless in another heavy tourist area of Lahaina; and we know that some of the homeless who come to our kitchen ride buses from other parts of our island to eat dinner on site at St. Theresa Church in Kihei, Maui.

We started to cook and deliver an additional 25 dinners twice a week to homeless women and children in Central Maui at an emergency overnight shelter in the spring of 2019 when I served as program director. I was confident we could extend our reach after receiving the first \$58,000 grant, funded by state legislation and administered by the Hawaii Tourism Authority and the Hawaii Hotel and Lodging Association. When the second \$58,000 grant came (which we earned in part by asking donors to support Hale Kau Kau in the annual Maui Charity Walk fundraiser), I agreed in the fall of 2019 to provide 42 meals twice a week to the homeless shelter in Lahaina. There, the shelter staff drives to Kihei and picks up dinners each time for sheltered individuals who have no kitchen in their units.

Hale Kau Kau is a ministry of St. Theresa Church and receives a \$100,000 grant a year for at least the last four years from the County of Maui. We've had a few private grants here and there. But the majority of our projected 2020 budget of \$503,000 comes from the volunteers and donors on Maui and throughout Hawaii, and from visitors on the US Mainland and in Canada.

We're staffed by two full-timers – the program director, who is on the Mainland because of family emergencies, and one full-time cook. Due to the timing and transition of new leadership staff at Hale Kau Kau, St. Theresa canceled this year's annual fundraising dinner gala. More than ever, Hale Kau Kau could use the hand up from House Bill 1945. Thank you so much for your advocacy for us and other nonprofits helping the homeless. We cannot overstate the importance of the vitally needed funds in House Bill 1945.

Sincerely,

Claudine San Nicolas Perry

Waikapu, Maui

csnperry@gmail.com

808.276.5721

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 10:30:16 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tina Albao	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha

Please find my testimony in support of HB1945.

Mahalo,

Tina

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 11:12:04 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sherry Finke	Individual	Support	Yes

Comments:

Homelessness is at crisis levels. There is not one cookie cutter, one size fits all solution. Each homeless individual has a unique set of needs thus the need for multiple pronged solutions. Included is the need for job skills training. River of Life Mission provides a culinary training arts program.

The program is designed to provide homeless individuals as well as at-risk youth job skills training necessary to secure and maintain employment in the Oahu hospitality industry. Participants also receive housing, meals & clothing while in program. Program is free of charge.

This program is funded by grants, especially those received the past 2 years from the HLTA Charity Walks. The state matching funds are especially needed. We support HB1945.



LATE

Testimony of Bambi Lau
Hawaii Island Charity Walk Coordinator
Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association – Hawaii Island Admin
Waikoloa Beach Marriott

Committees on Energy, Economic Development & Tourism and Human Services
House Bill 1945 House Draft 1, Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax

Aloha Chairman Wakai, Chairman Ruderman and committee members. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Hawaii Chapter of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association as well as the people of the Big Island.

In the hotel industry we sell and market our hotels & resorts and we also sell the “Destination”. In doing so, we paint the picture of what the Hawaiian vacation should be. Swaying palm trees, sandy beaches, the warm blue ocean, the volcano, waterfalls, hula dancers, fire dancers, Hawaiian music etc. We entice travelers to think of Hawaii first when making their travel plans. Because truth be told, we want their business. It's their travels and vacations to Hawaii that sustains our economy. But it's unfortunate when they land here in the islands (with their families) and see that their picture perfect vacation is tainted with the sight of homeless families on the streets, the beaches, the parks, the shopping centers and even at the hotels. What is being done to remedy that?

I've lived on the Big Island for 45 years. It's sad to see that the park that I used to play at as a child in Waimea is filled with homeless people who are trying to find shelter for the night. It's sad that the Old Airport football field that I used to cheer at (For pop warner football games,) is now filled with homeless individuals who have pitched tents for the night. But what can we do about it? Do we turn a blind eye to them, do we put a band aid on it and hope that this situation goes away? I was told that the homeless choose their paths and they choose to be homeless. There may be some truth to that, but I don't think that that is always the case. So again, what is being done to remedy that and better yet what can we do about that?

The silver lining on the cloud is that we have organizations in the islands who assist and work with the homeless population. And through our Statewide Charity Walk fundraising event we are able to support their work our communities. In 2019, on the Big Island; we were able to award \$64,000 to these organizations and then were able to match that with the money that we received from Hawaii Tourism Authority. A total of \$128,000 was awarded to the Aloha Club of Hilo, Catholic Charities Hawaii, Friends of the Children's Justice Center - East Hawaii, Habitat for Humanity-Hawaii Island, Hawaii County Economic Opportunity Council, Hawaii Island Home for Recovery, HOPE Services Hawaii, Project Vision Hawaii and The Salvation Army. \$128,000... to assist with the homeless issue on the Big Island. In our Charity Walk Kick off meeting yesterday, the Salvation Army was one of our presenters. They shared that they used their grant money to provide weekly meals to the homeless which steers the homeless away from “begging” and loitering around one of the main hotels in downtown Kona. They've also shared that with the homelessness grant money, they were able to assist 12 individuals. They were able to help them to find jobs, put them in homes and they are now stable and independent.

There's many more success stories that I could share with you because I love sharing them and they make me feel all warm and fuzzy but I know that we don't have time for that. So in conclusion I'd

like to humbly ask that you please consider supporting HB1945. You have the power to approve a bill that will allow us to help the organizations help our people. Thank you for consideration and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testament.

LATE

HB-1945-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2020 5:54:01 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/11/2020 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rita Sandi Palma	Testifying for Hawaii Island Home for Recovery, Inc. HIHR	Support	No

Comments:

ALOHA

LATE



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai‘i

Wednesday, March 11, 2020

House Bill 1945, HD 1

Testifying in Support

Aloha Chairs Wakai and Ruderman, Vice Chairs Taniguchi and Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism; and Committee on Human Services:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii stands in support of HB 1945, HD 1, which allocates TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriates funds for the Hawaii tourism authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds, and requires HTA to report to the 2021 legislature.

In 2019, 44.9 in every 10,000 people in Hawaii were experiencing homelessness, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress. The national average was 17 people per 10,000.

California and Hawaii have the highest rates of homelessness among all individuals (excluding families with children) with 68 and 63 of every 10,000 individuals experiencing homelessness. These rates are 2.5 times the national average rate of 24 per 10,000 individuals. Of Hawaii’s homeless individuals, 75% are unsheltered. Of 1,992 homeless families, 454 were unsheltered, or nearly 23%. Of 222 homeless youth, 149 were unsheltered, or 67%. Hawaii has one of the highest rates of veteran homelessness in the nation with 39 per 10,000 people, 58% of whom are unsheltered. 36% of Hawaii’s homeless population is chronically homeless, meaning individuals with disabilities who have been homeless for a year or more, or have experienced 12 or more months of homelessness over the last three years. More than 85% of chronically homeless people in Hawaii are unsheltered. Finally, Hawaii’s chronically homeless population has more than doubled since 2007.

Per Oahu’s 2019 point-in-time count, most of Hawaii’s homeless population lives on Oahu: more than 4,400 people. More than half of these people are unsheltered, living on sidewalks, in parks and in other public places not meant for human habitation.

Oahu has purportedly made great strides in reducing family and veteran homelessness: the number of homeless families decreased by 42% from 2015 to 2019 and veteran homelessness declined 18% in that time. The focus now is on the unsheltered population.

In 2018, the Institute for Human Services, the state's largest homeless shelter organization, has helped 359 individuals buy one-way plane tickets home through its 3-year-old Airline Relocation Program. The Family Life Center on Maui and Kauai Economic Opportunity launched similar relocation programs for the homeless with grants from the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association. In total, the programs have moved 491 people off Hawaii streets and into airplanes. Now it's time for the state to dedicate public funds for more airplane tickets HB 1945, HD1, would allow the Hawaii Tourism Authority and HLTA to use transient accommodations tax revenue to fund programs that address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, which could include adding money to existing relocation programs. The bill would require public funds to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the private sector.

For these reasons, including our rising homeless population, skyrocketing housing prices, stagnant middle-class wages, limited land space, increasing crime and threatened safety, we urge you to vote favorably on this bill to allocate TAT revenues into the tourism special fund and appropriate funds for the Hawaii tourism authority (HTA) and Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association to address homelessness in tourist and resort areas, subject to private matching funds; and require HTA to report to the 2021 legislature.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja
Chair, Human Environmental Impacts Committee
Environmental Caucus
Democratic Party of Hawaii
Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2018/03/hawaii-taxpayers-may-get-tapped-to-fly-homeless-off-island/>

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2019/05/23/considered-low-income-one-person-honolulu-according-hud/>

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/01/hawaii-is-no-longer-no-1-for-homelessness-new-york-is-worse/>