

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

February 10, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Lee, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2117 HD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: February 11, 2020, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill establishes a 3-year homeless employment grant program that provides homeless individuals with work opportunities and connects them with service providers. Requires the DHS to submit a report on the progress of the grant program. Requires DHS to submit a report on the progress of homelessness programs. Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2059. (HD1)

According to the National Alliance for Ending Homelessness, meaningful and sustainable employment is the key to creating and maintaining housing stability. Unemployment, underemployment, and low wages relative to rent are frequent causes of homelessness and burden millions of families with the risk of becoming homeless. Further, DHS recognizes that there is not enough housing subsidy to sustain housing for everyone who may need assistance. Alternatively, working with participants to gain meaningful and sustainable income is one strategy to help fill in the gap.

DHS has a number of existing programs statewide that provide job training and opportunities available to homeless clients with children. Programs such as SEE Hawaii Work

assist families with children who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families financial benefits, and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Employment and Training Program provides services for individuals who receive SNAP benefits. The City and County of Honolulu has the Rent to Work program, exclusive to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Homeless services agencies across the continuum have also recognized that securing or increasing income through employment will help place participants into permanent housing and keep them housed. The Institute of Human Services' (IHS) Hele2Work has been successful in providing complete services from an initial assessment to job placement. Hele2Work can be mobile and will meet the needs of participants. IHS continues to build relationships with employers in the community so that participants could gain access to jobs that pay more than the minimum wage.

Regarding section 2. (b), DHS recommends including chapter 103F –Purchases of Health and Human Services.

DHS respectfully request that any appropriation not replace or reduce budget priorities identified in the executive budget. DHS asks the Legislature for its support of the DHS budget request for funds to develop a state homeless data base to receive and analyze data from the Homeless Management Information Systems of the two continua of care.

With additional resources, DHS will work with stakeholders, other executive departments, and the University of Hawaii to identify available public-sector jobs and to develop a viable plan. Additionally, we anticipate that individuals participating in this pilot will require additional support services to maintain employment as well as housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LATE

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 11, 2020

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Lee, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

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

SUBJECT: **HB2117 HD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure and offers comments. In addition, the Coordinator respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce priorities identified in the executive budget.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator respectfully requests that the Legislature consider conducting the evaluation of employment programs specified in Section 3 to assist in determining the need for the establishment of the three-year grant program.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish a three-year Homeless Employment Grant Program that provides homeless individuals with work opportunities and connects them with service providers. The bill also appropriates funds for the program and requires DHS to submit a report to the Legislature prior to the 2021 Regular Session. In addition, the bill requires DHS to examine the effectiveness, progress, and success of employment programs that target young adults and youth within the department to ensure that essential services are provided to target homelessness and properly aligned within the department.

Job training and apprenticeship programs are key strategies to assist homeless individuals in growing income and preventing returns to homelessness following housing placement. In 2009, the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) implemented a Job Training Program in partnership with the Next Step shelter in Kakaako. By providing custodial

and maintenance jobs to Next Step residents, the program provided on-the-job training to homeless individuals and assisted with the maintenance and beautification of the park properties under HCDA's jurisdiction. Today, the Job Training Program has expanded beyond Kakaako Makai to include opportunities for job placement at other sites, including programs that provide participants with entry-level positions in the human services field. In addition, since 2017, Maui County has funded and administered a similar program that employs homeless individuals to clean and maintain County sidewalks in Wailuku and allows on-the-job training that can lead to more skilled positions longer term.

The Coordinator notes that this bill is modeled after a program in Albuquerque, New Mexico that is administered with the City of Albuquerque's Department of Solid Waste. In the Albuquerque program, the Department of Solid Waste hired homeless individuals to assist with landscape beautification and garbage removal and provided the individuals with direct on-site supervision. While DHS administers a variety of employment and job training programs for public benefit recipients, these programs are more general in nature than the City of Albuquerque program that the Employment Grant Program is modeled after.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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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

Hawaiian Health Care Systems

P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.

Parents and Children Together (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the

Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 10, 2020

To: Representative Chris Lee, Chair
And members of the Committee on Judiciary

Testimony in Support of HB 2117 HD1 Relating to Homelessness

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 2117 HD1 Relating to Homelessness.

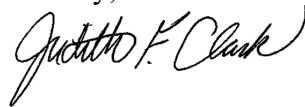
Homeless youth who are living on their own on the streets without support or guidance from their families are the most vulnerable segment of our homeless population. They are children who have not completed their education and lack employment experience.

While on the streets they have few options for meeting their basic survival needs. Homeless youth often trade sex for food, money or a place to sleep. They may be forced to eat food from garbage cans or panhandle.

An employment program would give them safer ways to meet basic needs while building the relationships and trust with support staff that will lead to leaving the streets. They would gain work experience that could lead to longer-term, competitive employment. And it would give them opportunities to contribute to their community by removing graffiti and litter.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director

COMMENTS REGARDING HB 2117: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawaii, Inc.
Hearing: Tuesday, 2/11/20; 2:00 pm; Room 325

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments regarding HB 2117 HD 1**, which would appropriate funds to establish a 3-year homeless employment grant program that provides homeless individuals with work opportunities and connects them with service providers.

We appreciate the legislature's recognition of the difficulties that individuals experiencing homelessness encounter when searching for employment. However, we would like to request that the legislature discuss and provide clarification on the following questions.

1. Section 1 states that the measure "Seeks out homeless individuals across an island or islands who wish to participate in the program, **with a focus on individuals who have yet to receive services.**" How will contracted organizations connect with these individuals before local service providers have done so? Will the contracted organizations be expected to offer employment before offering connection to services?
2. How will sites where the work is performed be chosen? Will only state-owned land be eligible?
3. As most of our program participants do not have reliable transportation, how will program participants be transported to work sites?
4. Who will supervise program participants? Will the contract with service providers fund a supervisory position? Further, is there a contingency plan if an individual experiences a psychotic episode?
5. **Would the legislature consider funding this program as a program component of Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD)?**

Mahalo nui for your consideration of our comments regarding HB 2117.

Sincerely,



Brandee Menino,
Chief Executive Officer

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY



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Brandee Menino

HB-2117-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 2:17:19 PM

Testimony for JUD on 2/11/2020 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bronsten Kossow	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Rep. Chris Lee, Chair

Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

Committee on Judiciary

Shanelle Acain, Individual

1396 Akamai Street

Kailua, HI 96734

(808) 354-7631

Date: Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 325

State Capitol

415 South Beretania Street

In support for HB 2117, Relating to Homelessness.

Aloha Representatives and Committee I am in support of this bill being passed and this pilot program coming into full fruition. The State of Hawaii is in dire need of supporting our homeless anyway we can. As the bill mentions and as we all know our homeless population is on the rise. I am proud of the work Dr. Josh Green is doing relating to housing and trying to meet the mental health needs of this population. Now, we must also address employment. Many homeless individuals lose documentation like their state ID and birth certificates which deter them from securing employment and receiving the services they need. They also face

discrimination and misunderstanding but with a program like this that's focus is to connect them with employment and needed services, this effort is of the utmost importance. I feel it is our duty to build community, invest in our people and really show what we value as a society. We need to value each other and utilize our resources to bring Hawaii to where we envision it to be through action programs like these. The issue of homelessness is not going to go away overnight but through programs and services that create housing, mental health services and employment opportunities we will begin to make the changes necessary for our future.

I am in full support of HB 2117 because we are in need of programs and service providers passionate about making the changes needed in our society. Many of our homeless individuals came across hard times either in their childhoods or adulthoods and need a hand up. Countless others are a paycheck or situation away from joining this community. This program will allow each member of this community the opportunity to take steps forward and to a better life.

Sincerely,

Shanelle Acain