



**LATE**

**EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS**  
HONOLULU

**DAVID Y. IGE**  
GOVERNOR

February 11, 2019

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

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair  
Senate Committee on Housing

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

**SUBJECT: SB 1395 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Monday, February 11, 2019, 3:05 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator supports this measure, as it provides funding for a key program to reduce and prevent homelessness.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to make an appropriation for the state rent supplement program.

Homelessness remains one of the most pressing challenges facing Hawaii, and the State has adopted a comprehensive framework to address homelessness that focuses on three primary leverage points – affordable housing, health and human services, and public safety. The Coordinator works closely with multiple state agencies and homeless service providers to implement this framework through the delivery of housing-focused services like Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing, as well as outreach and treatment services for unsheltered homeless individuals experiencing severe mental illness and/or addiction. The coordinated efforts to implement the State's framework to address homelessness have made progress in reducing the number of homeless individuals statewide. Between 2017 and 2018, the number of homeless individuals in Hawaii decreased by 690 individuals (9.6%). The decrease was one of the largest

numeric decreases in homelessness in the country, only exceeded by decreases in California, Florida and Michigan.

The Coordinator notes that the state rent supplement program is an effective tool in reducing and preventing homelessness. The program provides a shallow rent subsidy for households that are low-income and would not otherwise be able to cover the full cost of rent on their own. Because the level of funding for the state rent supplement program is capped at a maximum of \$500 per month per household, the program has the ability to address a large number of households and is one of the more cost effective programs to address homelessness. In addition to directly assisting homeless individuals and families to access housing, the state rent supplement program prevents homelessness for households that – but for the additional funding provided by the program – find themselves at imminent risk of homelessness.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



PANKAJ BHANOT  
DIRECTOR

CATHY BETTS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

**LATE**

February 11, 2019

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

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair  
Senate Committee on Housing

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1395 – RELATING TO HOUSING**

Hearing: Monday, February 11, 2019, 3:05 p.m.  
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this bill as the State Rent Supplement program provides rental assistance for working families who are struggling to meet their rent. Housing stability promotes employment, educational success, and supports good health outcomes.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to make an appropriation for the state rent supplement program.

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

**LATE**

**SB-1395**

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 7:25:22 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2019 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Goodman	Testifying for Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force	Support	Yes

Comments:

**TO:** Senator Russell Ruderman, Chair, Senator Stanley Chang, Chair, and Members, Committees on Human Services, and Housing

**FROM:** Mike Goodman, Director, The Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force, Member, Partners in Care

**RE: SB1395**

**Hearing: Monday, 2/11/19; 3:05 pm; CR 016  
Chair Ruderman, Chair Chang, and Members, Committee on Human Services, and Housing:**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support of SB SB1395, to provide funding for the State Rent Supplement Program subsidy.**

This program serves families who barely make ends meet and require either temporary or permanent financial assistance to prevent them from becoming homeless.

It's far more cost effective (not to mention humane) to prevent families from becoming homeless than it does to rebuild their lives and rehouse them after they become homeless.

The State Rent Supplement Program provides what is referred to in the parlance of homeless service providers as "shallow subsidies". This is distinguishable from "deep" subsidies, which are for those at the lowest end of the financial spectrum. Since this program serves families with more or less stable incomes, modest subsidies are sufficient to prevent homelessness. Therefore, this program tends to do alot of good relative to the amount of money spent.

**DESPITE THE HAWAII KAI TASK FORCE'S SUPPORT FOR THIS BILL, WE RECOMMEND CONSOLIDATING THIS BILL WITH SIMILAR BILLS, AND COMBINING THE STATE RENT SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM WITH OTHER SIMILAR PROGRAMS:**

The Director of the Department of Human Services, Pankaj Bhanot, once commented that one of the problems he has fighting poverty, is the “silo-ing” of assistance programs; In other words, too much compartmentalization, too much duplication, and too many restrictive mandates preventing flexibility and creative solutions.

We have programs that provide rent subsidies to families, and other programs for individuals with certain handicaps. We have a bill for a pilot program to provide subsidies for our kapuna. There are other bills to re-direct \$75 million dollars from the Rental Housing Revolving Fund for the chronic homeless, some of which would also be used for rent subsidies. This bill provides “shallow” subsidies, while other programs provide “deep” subsidies.

There are at least 20 Senate and House Bills introduced in 2019, which pertain to affordable housing and rental subsidies. The following is only a partial list.

**(SB1031, SB471, SB474, SB229)\*** SB1 (Aloha Homes Senator Chang’s bill?) SB400 (Aloha Homes Senator Chang’s bill?) SB14, SB886, SB1119, SB890, SB1020, SB123, SB1183, SB1194, SB515, SB636,, SB363, SB1331, SB1468, SB387 (For teachers from Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund), SB1189, SB886, SB100,

**(HB643, HB574, HB473, HB476, HB1554, HB476)\*** HB1141 (Aloha Homes) HB1204, HB955, SB1182, HB956, HB1373, HB479, HB1141, HB1312, HB543, HB1403, HB962, HB819, HB1036,

***\*(Bills initiated by Partners In Care)***

The Hawaii Kai Task Force supports many of the foregoing bills, all of which have laudable goals and salient points. Accordingly, we think this bill, and all similar bills should be “kept alive”, until a conference committee or other appropriate Legislative entity, can consolidate the best of each into a single rent subsidy program. **THE BILL SHOULD PROVIDE THE BROADEST DEFINITION OF A BONA-FIDE BENEFICIARY POSSIBLE. THE BILL CAN ALSO SPECIFY WHICH BENEFICIARIES HAVE PRIORITY OVER OTHERS.** It should then be left to the Department of Human Services, (or whichever department is chosen to manage the program), to decide whether or not and how to divide the rent subsidy program into specialized units.

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify.**

**LATE**

**SB-1395**

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 8:44:22 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2019 3:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

02/12/18

**LATE**

415 South Beretania Street  
Conference Room 016

Committee on Human Services  
Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Committee on Housing  
Senator Stanley Chang, Chair  
Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, Vice Chair

RE: Senate Bill 1395

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Linda Ford and in less than six months I will be 70 years old. I am also disabled and require a walker or rollator to help with my balance to be able to walk. I live by myself with a little bird as my companion. With Rent Subsidy, I have a better quality of life. I have a reason and hope to wakeup every morning. I am very thankful for the rent subsidy that I receive. I am grateful and appreciate all the help that you have given me. Yet I have a fear that I will become a statistic of being lost and forgotten, living with hopelessness and despair, becoming homeless, so I implore you, please continue the Rent Subsidy Program.

Thank you and May God Bless You All,

Linda Ford

SB 1395 RELATING TO HOUSING

**LATE**

State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Conference Room 016

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Russell E. Rudeman, Chair  
Senator Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Senator Stanley Chang, Chair  
Senator Dru Mamo Kanuha, Vice Chair

SB1395 RELATING TO HOUSING

Aloha, Committee on Human Services & Committee on Housing:

I am writing to inform you that I am a current recipient of the Rent Supplement Program pertaining SB1395. My name is Thomas Flores, and I would love the opportunity to share my point of view in regard to the Rent Supplement Program. I arrived in Honolulu Hawaii in 2016, with a sack clothes and very little financial resources. During the first week of living in Honolulu, HI, I submitted job applications and lived at Waikiki Beachside Hostel on a day by day basis. By the second week, I received a call for an interview at CJ's New York Style and Deli located inside the Hilton Hawaiian Village. Thankfully, I was hired on the spot for the Dishwasher position, and looked forward to receiving my next pay check and an employee meal.

As my financial resources depleted, I submitted an application at Next Step Homeless Shelter, located in the Kakaako area. After one month of being wait listed, I was accepted into Next Step Homeless Shelter and assigned to case worker, Garret Koshiba. I lived at Next Step



Homeless Shelter for about a year and experienced challenges that helped me grow as an individual. As I was living at Next Step Homeless Shelter my life began to change in a positive direction. Next Step Homeless Shelter provided the Go Cook and Go Bake Programs held at Kapiolani Community College. Each program was three months long and paid each participant \$50 per day. I gladly accepted this opportunity and earned my basic cooking and baking certification within six months.

A week after completing the Go Cook and Go Bake programs. I updated my resume from Dishwasher to Cook and Baking Apprentice and submitted applications to several businesses in search of employment. About two weeks later, I received a call from Safeway for an interview. I attended the interview for the Baker position and was hired immediately, due to my Go Bake certification.

Next Step Case Worker, Garret Koshiba, explained since I was generating income, I would be able to qualify for the Rent Supplement Program monitored by Catholic Charities at the time. We submitted an application to Catholic Charities, which got accepted. Catholic Charities then assigned me to Case Worker Danielle Gella, who constantly searched to find me housing. Ms. Gella and Garret Koshiba would contact me on their days off to discuss my housing situation. After months of searching for a Landlord who would accept the Rent Supplement Agreement; Case Workers, Garret Koshiba and Daniella Gella found me a place to live, and now I live in a small studio with bed to sleep in, which is a dream come true. In addition, since the supervision of the Rent Supplement Program has transferred from Catholic Charities to Hawaii Public Housing; Public Housing Specialist II, Mr. D Malachi has done an exceptional job in ensuring that I have a place to live through his professional communication and passion for helping others in need.

Furthermore, the Go Cook and Go Bake programs inspired me to continue my education at Kapiolani Community College. I am one semester from obtaining my AS in Pastry Arts and would like to continue my education by earning an AS Culinary Arts as well. I believe this education will give me a competitive advantage in the food industry and most importantly, I will never go hungry.

I understand the Rent Supplement Program may cease to exist or endure changes. Therefore, I am asking the committee to allow the Rent Supplement Program to continue so it

may change people's lives for the better. I would like to continue to better myself as a person to reach my full potential. However, it would be extremely difficult for me to survive without the Rent Supplement Program. For the reason being, I have no family in Hawaii. The Rent Supplement Program, Hawaii Public Housing and Catholic Charities are my family.

I understand cost, expenses, and outcomes are important factors when it comes to making a decision in regard to SB1395. However, I ask the Committee to take into consideration the intangible value involved. I am proud to be a resident of Hawaii. Hawaii's cultural values have affected me for the better. I leaned to help others, regardless if I enjoy their company or not, because it is the right thing to do. Investing in the Rent Supplement Program is the right decision, because some recipients will grow exponentially and give back to the community who served them.

Lastly, the Rent Supplement Program has opened many doors for myself. For instance, Kapiolani Community College, Frolic Hawaii, and a branch within City of Honolulu have asked to conduct an interview, because they consider myself a success story. Kapiolani Community College is creating a poster with me on it, that will encourage students to join the Go Cook and Go Bake programs. The poster will be finalized in March of 2019. The interview and photos will be sent to Frolic Hawaii for further advertisement. The City of Honolulu would like to conduct the interview for the purpose of collecting funding resources for the Go Cook and Go Bake Programs. Believe me, I am not much of a talker, because I prefer to work. Therefore, I share these blessings in this testimony, because without the Rent Supplement Program none of the interviews in regard to our success would be possible. However, my counselors, who I consider family have asked me to conduct the interviews so I will. Furthermore, Hawaii Public Housing invited me to attend the Senate Hearing on SB1395, and I did because they are my family. Mahalo for your valuable time and consideration. If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via email at [thomasfl@hawaii.edu](mailto:thomasfl@hawaii.edu). I wish the committee the best.

Mahalo,

Thomas Flores