



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 3, 2020

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

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

SUBJECT: SB 2942– RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Monday, February 3, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator appreciates the intent of this measure, requests clarification, offers comments, and defers to the counties.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop and implement separate regional plans for various neighborhoods across the State to coordinate the services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the concerns of impacted communities and needs of the homeless population.

The Coordinator requests clarification if the proposed amendment to section 346-381.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), is intended to be included in the work of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) as described in section 346-381(b), HRS. Per section 346-381(b), the HICH is tasked to "formulate, and advise the governor on the implementation of, a unified ten-year statewide plan to address homelessness in all Hawaii counties."

The HICH includes membership from multiple State agencies, as well as the four counties, the Continua of Care (CoCs), the business community, and the faith-based community. The counties of Honolulu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii each have a county coordinator to develop and implement local plans to address homelessness in their region. The Coordinator works closely with the four county homeless coordinators who serve as designees

for their respective Mayors on the HICH. In addition, the Coordinator and the four county coordinators work closely with the CoCs – Partners in Care for Oahu, and Bridging the Gap for Hawaii island, Maui, and Kauai – that are regional planning bodies tasked by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) with coordinating housing and services at the local level for homeless individuals and families.

With input from the counties and the CoCs, the Coordinator established regularly monthly meetings with federal, state, and county agencies that fund homeless services, as well as monthly meetings with technical assistance providers and consulting groups working on homeless issues in Hawaii. The discussions with the counties, funders, and CoCs informed the use of Ohana Zone funds by the State, and resulted in the development of new programs such as the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons (HONU) program that provides mobile services to address the needs of rural areas on Oahu that do not have existing emergency shelter capacity.

The collaborative efforts between the State and counties contributed to an overall statewide decline in the Point in Time count of homeless individuals by 19.1% (1,509 individuals) between 2016 and 2019, including a 39% decrease (1,473 individuals) in homeless families. During this same period, during the term of the Coordinator, the number of individuals exiting from homeless programs to permanent housing increased by 73% - an increase from an average of 357 per month to an average of 616 per month.

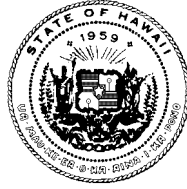
Also, recall Act 162 (2019) was the Legislature and State's effort to increase capacity of community providers to become providers of homeless services. Act 162 (2019) directed DHS in partnership with the State Procurement Office to provide training on government procurement and other relevant procedures to nonprofit organizations that offer homeless outreach services or manage homeless housing programs in rural areas of the State. Four training events were held since the end of last session. On-going capacity building is necessary for communities to address the complex needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator respectfully requests that the Legislature consider appropriating resources directly to the four counties to support the implementation of

targeted regional plans; the Coordinator will continue to work with each county to address regional needs.

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

January 31, 2020

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

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 2942 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: February 3, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this bill, offers comments, and defers to counties and other planning authorities.

PURPOSE: The purpose of SB 2942 requires the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop and implement separate regional plans for various neighborhoods across the State to coordinate the services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the concerns of impacted communities and needs of the homeless population.

DHS appreciates the efforts of increasing homeless strategies, however DHS is concerned that this proposal may duplicate current efforts. The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness is the chair of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH). HICH is the current forum for strategy development in context of a statewide strategy to end homelessness. HICH may develop separate regional and implementation plans if it is not already happening.

Importantly, continued investment to increase the capacity of community organizations to provide government funded services is important. With funding provided through Act 162 (2019), the State Procurement Office (SPO) and DHS Homeless Programs office

(HPO) developed a training for community providers interested in providing services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Thus far SPO and HPO conducted four training sessions for interested community organizations.

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

SB-2942

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 2:46:42 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/3/2020 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Nakama	Testifying for Maui County	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is David Nakama, the Homeless Program Coordinator for the County of Maui and a board member for Bridging the Gap Continuum of Care for the past three years. First of all, let me express that Scott Murashige and his staff have been in continuous contact with the Maui County Homeless Program since the inception of our program. We have built a well-groomed working relationship with Mr. Murashige's office keeping us informed of Statewide matters and issues and also what's happening at the legislature and senate. We have worked in very close collaboration on various projects including cleanups of illegal encampments on State lands and the Maui Ohana Zone project.

When reading this bill, it seems like the concern is that Mr. Murashige's office has not been collaborating with the neighboring Counties. I would vehemently counter that notion by informing this committee that Mr. Murashige and his staff have diligently worked with both my office on Maui and with the BTG board on numerous issues. Mr. Murashige's knowledge and commitment is invaluable in our work to end homelessness in Hawaii.

I am opposed to this bill because it seems like this is a matter of "if it ain't broken, don't fix it." There are no specifics to what the bill is asking of Mr. Murashige. This may create an air of confusion and unalignment, which we most certainly do not need. The work in the field of homeless services and policy can be very volatile. My ask is to please leave this work to the experts who are knowledgeable and dedicated, which you have before you in the Governor's Office on Homelessness.

Mahalo

David
Nakama
Homeless Program
Coordinator
Maui

County of

SB-2942

Submitted on: 2/2/2020 5:08:55 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/3/2020 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

We appreciate the intent of this Bill and offer our comments to caution the Committee about unintended consequences.

As the Executive Director of IHS, The Institute for Human Services, and representing our agency in the statewide Housing ASAP consortium of service providers to homeless families, and a member of Oahu's Partners in Care Continuum of Care, I have found the Governor's Coordinator Scott Morishige and his staff to be integrally involved in supporting regional initiatives addressing homelessness. My understanding is that It is intended to function as the policy arm of State efforts to end homelessness and coordinates a multitude of strategies across State and county systems to more effectively meet the service and housing needs of persons experiencing homelessness.

For sample, the Governor's Coordinator is coordinating numerous federal and state-hired consultants that are addressing different aspects of homeless resources and approaches that can be better coordinated and streamlined to make our homeless response systems more efficient and effective. His goal has been to make services more accessible, coordinated and titrated appropriately to achieve best use of current resources available, a goal shared by service providers. As such, these changes are being done through the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness which Mr. Morishige leads. This forum enables the input of service providers across the State and includes work across State departments like Dept. of Human Services Medicaid and Homeless Programs Office, the Dept. of Health, the Department of Public Safety, the Attorney General's office, Judiciary, and the Hawaii Public Housing Authority and Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to name a few.

We have also observed that Mr. Morishige and members of his team work closely with the City of Honolulu and neighbor island counties to support implementation of plans in specific regions. Examples of this include the State's decision to fund Honolulu's HONU Mobile Navigation Center that is currently sited in Waipahu, effecting jurisdictional oversight changes to facilitate clean up efforts in Kakaako on Oahu; directing Ohana Zone funding to projects on each of the islands for Oahu; and responding to

particular homeless service needs that result from disasters, always in coordination with local counties.

As a contracted service provider with the State and the City for assigned regions, IHS is intentional about working collaboratively to design local plans with City Councilmembers, businesses, faith communities, community groups, healthplans and other stakeholders in a targeted areas. Our concern is that assigning the Governor's Coordinator to develop local plans could collide with existing efforts to address regional homelessness that rightfully belong in the hands of local stakeholders.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Mitchell



Monday, February 3, 2020

Senate Bill 2942
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Ruderman, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee on Human Services,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i (The Party) **stands in support of SB2942** Relating to Homelessness. The bill would require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop and implement separate regional plans for various neighborhoods across the state to coordinate the services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the concerns of impacted communities and needs of the homeless population.

As urban Honolulu has historically received the most moneys to address the homeless issue, this bill would be the most equitable way to distribute efforts and moneys between the regions instead of concentrating predominately in urban Honolulu. SB2942 would assist in combatting the homeless issue on a region-by-region basis as all regions have their own specific needs and requirements.

In 2019, 44.9 in every 10,000 people in Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i'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%. Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i'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 Hawai'i are unsheltered. Finally, Hawai'i's chronically homeless population has more than doubled since 2007.

Per O'ahu's 2019 Point-In-Time Count, most of Hawai'i's homeless population lives on O'ahu: 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.

O'ahu has 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.

SB2942 would be a model way to successfully alleviate homelessness on a region-by-region basis. These services may include, but not limited to, non-emergency medical services, tests for HIV, STD and hepatitis; services for family planning, child and family services, behavioral health, substance abuse, and mental health services; dental care; referral services; shower and laundry services; clean clothing; health insurance enrollment; pharmacy services; "street medicine" for those living on the streets, in parks, along river banks, on beaches, in abandoned buildings; and other assistance services, all of which would help to satisfy very important and critical needs of our homeless populations as required per their individualized region plans.

For these reasons, including our rising homeless population, skyrocketing housing prices, stagnant middle-class wages, limited land space, we urge you to vote favorably on this bill to require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop and implement separate regional plans for various neighborhoods coordinate services and shelter facilities for the homeless population.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,



Josh Frost
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i



Zahava Zaidoff
Co-Chair, Legislation Committee
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

<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/>

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2018/04/legislators-agree-to-spend-millions-more-on-affordable-rentals/>

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2017/04/lawmakers-fail-to-fund-hawaiis-ambitious-housing-plans-again/>

I am Maude Cumming, Executive Director of Family Life Center, offering services on the islands of Maui and Kauai. During my 22 year career in the homeless field I have also served as the chair of the Bridging the Gap (BTG) - the neighbor islands Continuum of Care and representative to the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness. I offer testimony on SB 2942.

I have had interaction with the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness since the position was created – most recently with Scott Morishige. Scott has always been responsive and available. He is always reachable by telephone or email even after hours and on weekends. I never hesitate to pick up the phone to call Scott's cell to ask direct and sometimes hard questions. This accessibility has made it possible to keep informed as well as to inform the coordinator on any concerns or questions. It is a two way street with Scott frequently calling for input prior to any decision making. It is unclear to me what SB 2942 is intended to achieve but I support the work that Scott and his team are doing.

SB-2942

Submitted on: 1/31/2020 7:06:15 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/3/2020 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carmie Spellman	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Excellent Idea.

SB-2942

Submitted on: 2/1/2020 2:53:55 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/3/2020 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lori Tshako	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Ruderman and Members,

I am submitting testimony as an individual who has long been involved with the substantial task of solving homelessness. I have worked both at the State's Homeless Programs Office and at the County of Maui to address needs, garner resources, and move toward fundamental efforts to end the homelessness for as many people as possible.

The coordination that has been accomplished over the past nine years that the Governor's Office has appointed a Coordinator on homeless has been effective. Mr. Morishige and his colleagues have worked hard with the neighbor island Continuum of Care, Bridging the Gap, to assess the needs in our communities, suggest best practices, and encourage collaboration. Mr. Morishige has done this work through establishing trusting relationships with members of our coalition, assessing our systems' strengths and needs, and helping to connect us with relevant resources. He has been deeply involved with our planning and execution of our strategies without the need for legislative mandate, and indeed has been an advocate for the work being done to end homelessness on the neighbor islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on SB2942.