

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

February 7, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

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

Hearing: February 11, 2020, 10:40 a.m.
Conference Room 211, 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 this bill 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 effort to increase and coordinate homeless strategies. However, 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 on this bill.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

February 11, 2020

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: SB 2942– RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 10:40 a.m.
Conference Room 211, 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 NAKAMA

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: David Nakama, County of Maui Homeless Program Coordinator

SUBJECT: SB 2942 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Date of Hearing: February 11, 2020
Time: 10:40 a.m.
Location: Conference Room 211, State Capitol

I have had the privilege of being the Homeless Program Coordinator for the County of Maui for the past three (3) years. I have a couple of concerns regarding this bill. It states, “...*the State is failing to collaborate with various local nonprofit organizations throughout the State to address the homelessness issue.*” With all due respect, I would disagree with this statement as the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, Scott Morishige, has been in regular, constant contact with my office for a multitude of matters relating to projects, funding, concerns, and updates. Mr. Morishige has been extremely accessible and responsive to all of the requests relating to homelessness from Maui County. The level of collaboration from Mr. Morishige’s office has been, quite frankly, beyond my expectations, working closely together on matters such as the Ohana Zones Project and on-going cleanup efforts on government lands, to name a few.

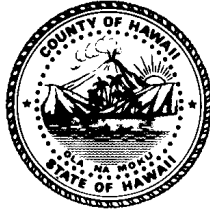
Another concern is that this bill seems vague and indistinct in the ask of the Governor’s coordinator on homelessness. As Mr. Morishige already is the chair of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness at which all of the County’s and Continua of Care are represented, this bill may be duplicating efforts already in place. Also, this bill has the potential of causing unintended confusion with various stakeholders at the local level.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in this matter.

Respectfully,

David Nakama

Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

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LATE

February 11, 2020

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz
Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 208

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Vice Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 221

Re: SB 2942. Public Hearing on February 11, 2020 at 10:40AM.

Aloha,

I am writing in support of Scott Morishige, the Governor Coordinator on Homelessness. I have worked along side Mr. Morishige over the last few years as the Hawai'i County works to develop and implement strategies and programs that provides opportunities to connect individuals and families experiencing homelessness to appropriate housing and programs.

Mr. Morishige is committed and dedicated to working collaborative with both the private and public sector in finding viable solutions and ensuring that everyone is working together to address homelessness on our island while taking into consideration the various dynamics of each community and county and allowing for innovative and creative approaches to be tested and implemented.

This bill seems vague and indistinct in the ask of the Governor's coordinator on homelessness. As Mr. Morishige already is the chair of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness at which all of the County's and Continua of Care are represented, this bill may be duplicating efforts already in place. Also, this bill has the potential of causing unintended confusion with various stakeholders at the local level.

I appreciate the work of Mr. Morishige and his team and look forward to continued success in addressing the needs of our most vulnerable community members. Together, we will make a difference.

Sharon Hirota

Sharon L. Hirota
Executive Assistant to
Mayor Harry Kim



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

COMMENTS FOR SB 2942: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair, Senator Gilbert S. C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair; and Members, Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Tuesday, 2/11/20; 10:40 AM; Conference Room 211**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments for SB 2942, which would require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop and implement separate regional plans for various neighborhoods across the State. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are a member of Partners in Care.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i. **Our current homeless programs work very closely with Mr. Scott Morishige and his team.**

There is regular and consistent coordination and communication between all parties. In fact, Mr. Morishige's team has been vital for our Housing First Program as they help to find clients that our staff cannot locate. Mr. Morishige also brings in other entities to help identify clients to link them back to the appropriate provider. These entities include but are not limited to: staff from public libraries, Department of Transportation, City and County of Honolulu, Department of Hawaiian Homelands, and many others. In addition, we also have witnessed Mr. Morishige respond quickly and help to coordinate efforts on the neighbor islands.

He is a leader in the homeless field and has a big impact on services. This is evident in his work as head of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH). This assembly provides an environment for providers from across the state and counties to discuss and provide input that impacts our homeless system and resources. Mr. Morishige is fair and ensures that each provider is heard and considers all members' suggestions and comments.

As a contracted service provider with the State and the City and County of Honolulu, Catholic Charities Hawaii is concerned that assigning this additional task will take away momentum from the efficient system that Mr. Morishige has helped to build and streamline. It also would appear that it would duplicate efforts already undertaken for regional approaches to end homelessness. Furthermore, local stakeholders and services providers know the needs of their communities. Each have developed plans already for their communities and we have seen Mr. Morishige and his team very involved in supporting these regional initiatives.

We urge you to reconsider this bill. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.





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COMMENTS REGARDING SB 2942: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawaii, Inc.
Hearing: Tuesday, 2/11/20; 10:40 am; Room 211

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments regarding SB 2942**, which 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.

We appreciate the legislature's recognition of the uniqueness of our counties, and the need to tailor solutions to the individual neighborhoods in which they'll be implemented, and to collaborate with the nonprofits who will implement them. We know that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to homelessness, and we are grateful that our representatives agree. In fact, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, Mr. Scott Morishige, has carried out this idea in every interaction I have had with him. Mr. Morishige's approach has both reflective and reflexive--taking note of the differences between Oahu and the neighbor islands, and working to ensure that the state's actions, positions, and policies support our population and our work here on Hawai'i Island.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Morishige is *present*. He regularly checks in to make sure we are receiving the support we need from his office, and frequently visits sites across the neighbor islands. He is exceptionally accessible and responsive, and has reliably assisted us with difficult and urgent requests.

As the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness is already cooperating with nonprofit organizations on the neighbor islands, we would like to request clarification on what outcomes are expected from this bill since local plans are developed locally by the communities on each island. Hawai'i Island's local coalition of stakeholders, Community Alliance Partners, has a data driven plan with a 3-year strategic direction that aligns with the State Plan.

Mahalo nui for your consideration of our comments **regarding SB2942**.

Sincerely,

Brandee Menino,
Chief Executive Officer

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY



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Brandee Menino



Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Senate Bill 2942
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i (The Party) stands in **support of SB2942** Relating to Homelessness.

As urban Honolulu has historically received the most moneys to address the homeless issue, requiring the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop and implement separate regional plans to coordinate services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the concerns of impacted communities and needs of these regional homeless populations 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. The focus now is on the unsheltered population and the master plan includes funding for the rental housing revolving fund

Through SB2942, having the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness develop and implement separate regional plans for various neighborhoods across the State to coordinate services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organization to meet the concerns of impacted communities and the need of the homeless population would be the model way to successfully alleviate homelessness on a region-by-region basis. These services may include, but may not be 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, we urge you to vote favorably on this bill.

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

LATE

SB-2942

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 1:59:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/11/2020 10:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha Senator DelaCruz and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I sit as the chair for the non-profit, Kealahou West Oahu, and am a member of various community organizations within the Wai`anae community.

I would urge caution to attempting to have the Governor's Office of Homelessness coordinator utilize his time to develop neighborhood/regional plans for communities throughout the State regarding homelessness in localized communities.

The pitfalls are many, not all communities, while having homeless residents residing there, may have shelters or many other options for housing within that community but require them to bridge to other communities for resources. thereby causing more complex plans with neighboring communities.

In addition, regarding the current State Homelessness Coordinator, I have never had occasion to be frustrated in attempting to reach him. He has been available to me with concerns and situations not only during work hours but at night and on weekends/holidays as things come up within our community.

I have found him to be open and reach out to our shelter and outreach organizations on a regular basis and to keep our teams involved in activities that occur or are scheduled along the Coast. It is not unusual for him to actually be on-site to assist in various actions requiring SPOs or SNOs.

My recommendation is to provide the additional support needed to determine what best programs are available to work with the new population of homeless, either newly homeless or those who have become hardened to the system to determine better solutions to assist with their mental illness, substance abuse problems or domestic abuse problems. These are the areas where we need the universal oversight and recommended solutions to get more of our homeless off the streets and remain off the streets.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hearing: Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 @ 10:40 AM

From: Heather Lusk, Executive Director, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Comments on SB 2942

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the committee

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) would like to offer comments on SB2942, relating to homelessness. HHRC has worked closely with Mr. Scott Morishige, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness since he first started in the position. Mr. Morishige was instrumental in the implementation of several projects we work with including Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) where much needed linkage with the Sheriffs and other public safety stakeholders. In fact, HHRC strongly credits Scott with helping make the LEAD pilot successful with his willingness to work with our staff and the evaluators to ensure integration of our efforts into the greater homeless continuum of care. Mr. Morishige has been a much needed resource for those of us working to combat homelessness from the non-profit sector as he links us with efforts at the State and County level, helps build relationships among leaders and has shared valuable federal resources (such as from USICH) to inform our activities.

HHRC's mission is to *reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific*. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities. We foster health, wellness, and systemic change in Hawai'i and the Pacific through care services, advocacy, training, prevention, education, and capacity building. HHRC works at the intersection of homelessness, substance use and mental health.

HHRC respectfully requests that SB 2942 be amended to include comments about Mr. Morishige's accomplishments as well as provide the flexibility for the Office of Governors' Coordinator on Homelessness so it can continue to provide the support to agencies like HHRC.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2942

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 6:28:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/11/2020 10:40:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

SB-2942

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 1:10:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/11/2020 10:40:00 AM

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

Comments: