



Josh Frost - President • Patrick Shea - Treasurer • Kristin Hamada
Nelson Ho • Summer Starr

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

Proposing an Amendments to Article IX, Section 5, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii
Testifying in Support

Aloha Chair and members of the committee,

The Pono Hawai'i Initiative (PHI) **supports SB3063 Proposing an Amendment to Article IX, Section 5, of the Constitution of the State of Hawaii**, which would require the State to assure that each resident has access to housing as provided by law.

Having shelter and the security of a stable residence should be a basic right afforded to all people. It is something the State should strive to provide for all residents. Currently, Hawaii's constitution asserts that we have a right to a clean and healthful environment, this needs to be expanded to include access to housing. There is a crisis happening in Hawai'i with many individuals and families struggling to find affordable, clean and safe housing. By creating more affordable and accessible housing we can make strides toward increasing the quality of life for all people in Hawai'i.

For all these reasons, we urge you to move this bill forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity,
Gary Hooser
Executive Director
Pono Hawai'i Initiative

TESTIMONY ON BEHALF OF
THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF HAWAII
c/o 1658 Liholiho St #205
Honolulu, HI 96822

February 5, 2020

RE: SB3063 to be heard Friday February 7, in Room 016, at 11:00 AM
To the members of the Senate Committees on Housing and on Judiciary

OPPOSE

Dear Senators:

If you can't fix this problem with changes in zoning laws, and other legislative actions, what makes you think it will magically solve itself with a constitutional amendment? This simply will create another obligation without any coherent means of meeting it. Look at the record of keeping the obligations for public retirement benefits and medical costs funded.

At no point in the forty five years I have lived in Hawaii have the county governments addressed the many zoning and building code issues that have created this problem. The only place in our state wherein such restrictions go unenforced, in the Puna District of Hawaii County, is the only place where truly affordable housing exists.

Aloha



Tracy Ryan
For the Libertarian Party of Hawaii



SB 3063, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE IX, SECTION 5, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

FEBRUARY 7, 2020 · SENATE HOUSING COMMITTEE AND SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
· CHAIRS SEN. STANLEY CHANG AND SEN. KARL RHOADS

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: IMUAlliance supports SB 3063, proposing an amendment to Article IX, Section 5, of the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i, which proposes an amendment to article IX, section 5, of the Constitution of the State of Hawai'i to require the State to assure that each resident has access to housing as provided by law.

Today, **the lack of affordable housing exacerbates the economic insecurity suffered by local families, which sex traffickers use to prey upon potential victims with false promises of financial stability and prosperity.** Hawai'i residents face the highest housing costs in the nation, at more than twice the national average. Researchers who authored the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2019* report found that a full-time worker would need to earn \$36.82/hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value in our state, with Honolulu experiencing a 67 percent increase in fair market rent between 2005 and 2015.

Average rent for a two-bedroom unit surpassed \$2,000 in recent years, with minimum wage workers needing to log 111 hours per week to afford a modest one-bedroom apartment at fair market value and 146 hours per week to afford a two-bedroom—a number that is equivalent to

working over 20 hours a day with no days off year-round. In the past five years alone, Honolulu rent has increased by more than 25 percent. While 43 percent of Hawai'i residents are renters (a number that does not include individuals and families renting outside of the regulated rental market), they earn an average wage of \$16.68/hour, according to NLIHC, scarcely enough to meet their basic needs.

One out of every four households in Hawai'i report that they are "doubling up" or are three paychecks or less away from being homeless, per the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Additionally, 63 percent of households are severely cost-burdened, following NLIHC data, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs, a number that rises to 83 percent of extremely low-income households, with only 74 homes available for every 100 households earning 80 percent of their respective area's median income.

Unsurprisingly, our state is now experiencing population decline. Hawai'i saw domestic out-migration increase for a third consecutive year in 2019, as the state's high cost of living continued to push people to the mainland. Census estimates show that our state's population dropped by more than 4,700 people, to 1,415,872, from July 2018 to July 2019, when births, deaths, and migration were accounted for. That's the biggest numerical population drop since 2015 and it made Hawai'i one of just ten states in the country to lose population in 2019, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. People are simply being priced out of paradise.

While this constitutional amendment may seem aspirational, **the Hawai'i Housing Planning Study released by SMS Research and Marketing Services this year states that Hawai'i needs to build 50,156 new homes—for sale and rent—over the next five years to meet demand.** Yet, the study notes that homebuilders produced only 2,675 new homes on average annually from 2014 to 2017, down from a 2,800-home annual average between 2011 and 2014. To satisfy future demand, therefore, our state must produce 10,000 new homes per year. Over the next decade, however, SMS projects that an annual average of under 2,000 new homes will be produced, nowhere near enough to meet demand. We cannot continue to allow the islands to be used as a private Monopoly board for real estate speculators. To ensure that our islands are affordable for ourselves and future generations, we must take bold action ***now*** to increase our affordable housing supply for working families and advance the goal of providing homes for all.

**Testimony Before the Senate Judiciary and Housing
Committees**
Supporting SB 3063, Amending the Hawaii Constitution
to Assure Resident Access to Housing
Galen Fox, February 7, 2020

Chair Rhoads, Chair Chang, Committee Members:

I am on Faith Action's Housing Legislation Subgroup, but testify as an individual.

At his Second Inaugural, President Franklin Roosevelt famously said, "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished. . . . The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

83 years later, we have conquered lack of food and clothing. But Hawaii's affordable housing deficiency has reached crisis levels. Our children leave for lower-cost mainland homes. A majority of native Hawaiians now live elsewhere.

The right to shelter is part of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Making Hawaii the first state to assure residents access to housing is consistent with Hawaii's moral leadership — the first majority-minority state, the first to guarantee a women's right to choose, the first to pass the Equal Rights Amendment, and the first to give workers the right to prepaid medical care.

Hawaii produced Patsy Mink, who authored Title IX's guarantee of women's education equality, and Hawaii gave the country Barack Obama and Hope.

Protecting the environment, our State Constitution, in Article XI, says:

Each person has the right to a clean and healthful environment, as defined by laws relating to environmental quality, including control of pollution and conservation, protection and enhancement of natural resources.

Can we not do for residents' housing what we've done for the environment?



**SENATE COMMITTEES ON HOUSING, AND JUDICIARY
State Capitol, Conference Room 016
415 South Beretania Street
11:00 AM**

February 7, 2020

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 3063, PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE IX, SECTION 5, OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF HAWAII.

Chairs Chang and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Kanuha and Keohokalole, and members of the committees:

My name is Dwight Mitsunaga, 2020 President of the Building Industry Association of Hawaii (BIA-Hawaii). Chartered in 1955, the Building Industry Association of Hawaii is a professional trade organization affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders, representing the building industry and its associates. BIA-Hawaii takes a leadership role in unifying and promoting the interests of the industry to enhance the quality of life for the people of Hawaii. Our members build the communities we all call home.

BIA Hawaii supports the intent of S.B. 3063, which proposes a constitutional amendment that will assure each Hawaii resident has access to housing.

We have been strong and consistent advocates for government being more “proactive” in planning for growth and providing opportunities for the development of more housing at all price points. Over time, however, it appears that government has taken a reactionary and defensive stance to housing projects/developers, which has resulted in the critical housing shortage we currently face. This reactionary mindset and approach shows an unwillingness and inability to adequately plan for future growth. Lacking any bold vision to enact policies for growth that would allow the legitimate needs for housing to be met, and by capitulating to the demands of groups seeking to limit growth at all costs, government has abdicated one of its most fundamental responsibilities to ensure that every Hawaii citizen has access to housing they can afford.

We defer to others on whether or not this issue rises to the level of being included in the Hawaii State Constitution, but regardless of what mechanism is used, we applaud the effort to raise the level of awareness into a more “proactive” mode, in dealing with the future needs for housing in our state.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our comments on this matter.

tel. 808-629-7501
fax. 808-629-7701

94-487 Akoki St. , Ste 213
Waipahu, HI 96797

www.biahawaii.org
info@biahawaii.org