



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

March 23, 2021

TO: The Honorable Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **SB 221 SD1 HD1– RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Tuesday, March 23, 2021, 2:00 p.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 325  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure and respectfully offers comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), to develop plans for the four counties to coordinate the services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the concerns of communities impacted by homelessness and the needs of the homeless population within each county. The county plans must identify specific regions within each county, identify specific goals and objectives for each region, and contain specific strategies to address unmet needs in each region and county. In addition, the Coordinator is required to submit annual reports to the legislature on the status of the county plans.

The Coordinator is concerned that, as currently drafted, this measure adversely impacts the autonomy of each county to direct plans regarding the unique needs in their jurisdiction. While the Coordinator works in partnership with the counties, the Coordinator does not have direct authority over each county to require the county's implementation of specific strategies. In addition, additional resources may be required to develop strategies for each county and

each region within a county, as well as report on the progress of these strategies on an annual basis.

As Chair of the HICH, the Coordinator actively facilitates statewide efforts to address homelessness, and submits a [comprehensive annual report to the legislature](#) that provides an overview of the current state of homelessness in Hawaii, as well as specific actions taken to implement the ten-year statewide plan to address homelessness. The 2021 report included specific updates for each county, including the use of [Ohana Zone](#) funds to increase housing, shelter, and outreach capacity in the City & County of Honolulu, Hawaii County, Maui County, and Kauai County. For example, the report detailed the development of the [Kealaula at Pua Loke](#) housing project on Kauai, [Huliau](#) housing project on Maui, and the new [Ka Lamaku](#) and [Hale Hanakahi](#) shelters on Hawaii island.

The implementation of the ten-year plan is collaborative, and includes the collective efforts of the Coordinator, multiple State agencies, the two Continua of Care (CoCs), the four counties, federal agencies, and the private sector. Since 2016, the State and counties collectively emphasized a housing-focused approach to homelessness, resulting in [a statewide reduction in the homelessness Point in Time Count](#) and increased placements to permanent housing. This collaborative approach included the efforts of several State departments, including Department of Human Services (DHS), Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Education among others. A variety of data is reviewed to evaluate progress and is [posted online for public review](#). Between 2015 and 2020, the number of homeless individuals in the Point in Time count decreased by 1,463 individuals (18.5%). In addition, the percentage of homeless individuals placed into permanent housing from homeless programs increased from one-third in 2016 to over fifty percent in 2018, 2019, and 2020. In addition, in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Transportation, the Coordinator facilitated the removal of 5,990 tons (13.8 million pounds) of trash and debris associated with unauthorized encampments on State lands statewide.

To ensure efforts address regional needs and align federal, state, and local funding efforts, the Coordinator convenes monthly meetings with the respective homeless coordinators for the four counties, as well as a separate homeless funders meeting. The funders meeting

includes HUD, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, DHS, DOH, and Office of Youth Services staff. A product of the funders group is a [homelessness fiscal map of federal, state, and local funding](#) for homelessness services that was shared with the HICH in December 2020, as well as a more recent [sub-set of the fiscal map for eviction and homelessness prevention](#) programs.

To build capacity and facilitate information sharing, the Coordinator facilitates [monthly webinars](#), convenes bi-weekly outreach and shelter provider meetings, and assists with training on homelessness for State and local law enforcement. Recent webinar topics include updates from the four counties, examples of a new pallet home program on Maui to facilitate permanent housing placements, and vaccination efforts for unsheltered homeless communities. In addition, other recent collaborations include partnering with DHS and the State Procurement Office to implement a [statewide training on how nonprofit organizations can conduct business with the State and apply for federal and state funding](#). The Coordinator and staff also regularly participate in national and statewide conferences to present on topics such as [homelessness coordination to address encampments on public lands](#).

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator respectfully requests additional resources and staffing to develop, implement and report on county specific plans, including specific benchmarks for regions within each county.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

### COMMENTS for: SB 221 SD1 HD1: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
Hearing: Tuesday, 3/23/21; 2:00 PM; via Videoconference

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Matayoshi, and Members, Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments for SB 221 SD1 HD1. HD 1 was amended to require the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop plans for the various counties to coordinate services and shelter facilities to meet the concerns and needs of communities impacted by homelessness. I am Rob Van Tassell from Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

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 closely with the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH), Mr. Scott Morishige and his team.**

We support the intent of this bill, but are concerned that it might duplicate efforts already undertaken for regional approaches to end homelessness. 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 collaborating with and supporting these regional initiatives in each county.

There is regular and consistent coordination and communication between all parties. He works closely with Partners in Care on Oahu and the county to plan for needs and services, especially in this time of the pandemic. In addition, we also have witnessed Mr. Morishige respond quickly and help to coordinate efforts on the Neighbor Islands. He has brought together Partners In Care and Bridging the Gap (providers on the Neighbor Islands) for increased collaboration.

His work as head of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) has provided an environment for providers from across the state and counties to discuss and provide input that impacts our homeless system and resources.

We support each county and local area working on their own plans suitable for their community, along with the continued assistance and collaboration with the GCH.

**If your committee does pass this bill, we strongly urge that you provide additional resources to the office of the GCH in order to achieve the new mandates in this bill.**

For questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at 373-0356 or [bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org](mailto:bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org)



# PARTNERS IN CARE

*Oahu's Continuum of Care*

---

*Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.*

## Comments on SB221, Relating to Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)  
Hearing: Tuesday March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021, 2:00pm; via videoconference  
Position: **COMMENTS**

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Matayoshi and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Partners In Care, Oahu's Continuum of Care (PIC), thanks you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding **SB221; Relating to Homelessness**. PIC's mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation, and the coordination of integrated responses. As a coalition of homeless service providers, community members and individuals with lived experience PIC relies on the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness(GCH) in many ways, most notably, the ability to bring State programs and departments to the table to discuss issues relating to homelessness. PIC has a long history of working with Mr. Morishige at the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and collaborates with his office on an almost daily basis. PIC's Executive Director meets with Mr. Morishige every week to discuss relevant issues and prepare for trainings and meetings that will benefit the homeless service system and ultimately help us reach the goal of ending homelessness.

Over the last year, our entire community has been devastated by the Covid Pandemic. During this time, it has been crucial to make decisions quickly and be able to pivot whenever necessary. Mr. Morishige and his office has assisted in making that possible. Sharing of information throughout the pandemic has been a top priority and Mr. Morishige has helped immensely in the dissemination of information for the whole state. This has included, but not limited to, the creation of outreach meetings, emergency shelter meetings, weekly webinars in coordination with the Department of Health and much more. Mr. Morishige has joined in outreach efforts and has helped address issues in a concise and rapid fashion.

Every person experiencing homelessness has a different story, and this is crucial when we talk about the creation of plans to address homelessness. The GCH's involvement in all areas throughout the state enables us to stay connected with other parts of the state so that we can share in success' and learn from mistakes. The GCH allows for this flow of information to exist and encourages involvement from every sector of the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments with your Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Aloha

**Connie Mitchell, Advocacy Chair, PARTNERS IN CARE, OAHU'S CONTINUUM OF CARE**  
200 North Vineyard Boulevard • Suite 210 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96817 • (808) 380-9444 •  
[PICadvocate@gmail.com](mailto:PICadvocate@gmail.com)

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Carole Gruskin, 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

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

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

March 21, 2021

To: Representative Mark Nakashima, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

## Comments on SB 221 SB 1 HD 1 Relating to Homelessness

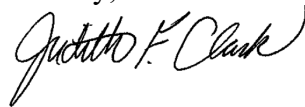
Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, has two concerns about this bill.

The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness has reached out frequently and consistently to HYSN to obtain information on youth homelessness and assure that youth, including those who are unaccompanied (not living with or supported by their families) are included in planning on homelessness. HYSN objects to the language in Section 1, Lines 4- 6 that states that the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness has failed to coordinate with non-profits.

Homelessness does not have one size fits all solutions. Each community and each subpopulation has differing issues and needs. Communities and counties have differing resources to apply to the problem. Thus, developing plans for each county and for communities within those counties makes sense. Local governments and service providers should be enabled to take the lead in developing plans for their communities. The Governor's Coordinator should be allowed but not required to participate.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director



**To: Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs**

**Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, March 23, 2021 2:00 PM**

**Re: Comments on SB221 HD1**

**From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center**

Dear Chair Nakashima and Vice Chair Matayoshi,

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) would like to offer comments on SB221 HD1 relating to homelessness. HHHRC 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, HHHRC 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.

HHHRC'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. While not a "traditional" homeless service agency, more than half of our clients/patients struggle with homelessness and we have been very active in providing housing services.

HHHRC respectfully requests that SB221 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 HHHRC.

Additionally, we are concerned about an addition to SB 221 HD1 that would mandate that the Governor's Office on Homelessness be required to do a county-specific plan through the HICH and we feel that this mandate is duplicative and unnecessary as many of the counties already have these plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



March 16, 2021

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Representative Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

Testimony SUPPORTING SB 221, SD 1

Aloha, Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and members of the Committee:

The Hawaiian Affairs Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly SUPPORTS SB 221, SD 1, to create a statewide interagency council on homelessness.

The situation of homelessness in Hawai'i has gotten worse each year over the past several years. A significant number of Native Hawaiians comprise the number of homeless, well-above their representation in the general population. A coordinated effort is necessary if we are going to be successful in addressing this problem.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka mahalo nui,

JUANITA MAHIENAENA BROWN KAWAMOTO, Chair

Hawaiian Affairs Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i





March 23, 2021

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Vice Chair

Testimony SUPPORTING SB 221, SD 1

Aloha, Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Matayoshi, and members of the Committee:

The Hawaiian Affairs Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly SUPPORTS SB 221, SD 1, to create a statewide interagency council on homelessness.

The situation of homelessness in Hawai'i has gotten worse each year over the past several years. A significant number of Native Hawaiians comprise the number of homeless, well-above their representation in the general population. A coordinated effort is necessary if we are going to be successful in addressing this problem.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Me ka mahalo nui,

JUANITA MAHIENAENA BROWN KAWAMOTO, Chair

Hawaiian Affairs Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

**SB-221-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 1:59:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kristen Alice	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Hope Services Hawai'i will offer comments on this measure in oral testimony.

**SB-221-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/23/2021 12:49:49 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kaikea K. Blakemore	Community Alliance Partners	Oppose	No

Comments:

Oppose

**SB-221-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/20/2021 2:35:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support

Having worked with Scott Morishige as a citizen of the community, I know that his position and all that it covers is daunting. Therefore I am supporting this bill.

As a person who lives in downtown, I have to say that things are not getting better and in fact Fort Street area seems to be getting even more challenging. Today, HPD was issuing parking tickets on King Street while the community was dealing with people fighting and spitting on each other. Their presence should be more than giving tickets.

So, while supporting Scott and his efforts, I will ask that for those with mental challenges and repeated issues (come walk with me if you don't know), we are not doing enough to protect the houseless or the community.

**SB-221-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2021 1:41:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support sb221 sd hd1

**SB-221-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/21/2021 6:02:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

Please support SB221, which should be a step in mitigating Hawaii's homelessness problem.

Thank you,

Andrea Quinn

**SB-221-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/22/2021 12:04:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/23/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rachael Ke	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

TO: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair Representative Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair

From: Rachael Ke, Resident of District 44

Subject: **SENATE BILL 221 SD1 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Aloha! My name is Rachael Ke, I am a resident of district 44 (Waianae Coast) and I **strongly support SB 221 SD1**. Here in Waianae there is a plethora of houseless individuals living in the mountains, beside the ocean, and everywhere in between. Majority of Waianae's houseless are of Native Hawaiian decent and they don't always have access to housing resources or they don't understand.

Over the years, the homeless population still continues to increase and I've witnessed so many teens, keiki, and kupuna living in these communities. As we all know, it is often difficult for teens and keiki to maintain good grades without having a stable and safe place to live. Although we have some services to assist our most vulnerable community, I feel that more is needed to address this crisis. As a behavioral health case manager, it can get a bit frustrating at times when attempting to assist clients with obtaining housing when limited resources are available.

I feel that SB 221 SD1 which allows the governor's coordinator on homelessness, in conjunction with the Hawaii interagency council on homelessness, to develop plans for the City and County to coordinate the services to meet the concerns of communities impacted by homelessness within each county may have a positive impact in helping our houseless individuals and families.

We must remember to Malama ke kahi I ke kahi, always. Mahalo for this opportunity to share!