

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

March 16, 2021

TO: The Honorable Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
House Committee on Health, Human Services, and Homelessness

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

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

Hearing: Tuesday, March 16, 2021, 9:30 a.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 329
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

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

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to allow 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 Coordinator acknowledges that each county has unique regional needs, and that coordination with the four counties is critical. As Chair of the HICH, the Coordinator actively coordinates statewide efforts to address homelessness. Section 346-381(b) requires the HICH to "formulate, and advise the governor on the implementation of, a unified ten-year statewide plan to address homelessness in all Hawaii counties." The ten-year plan is developed and implemented in close collaboration with homeless coordinators in the four counties, who each serve on the HICH and represent the Mayor of their respective county. This bill will allow for specific regional plans for each county to complement the overall ten-year plan.

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, Department of Health, and the Department of Education among others. 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.

Beginning in 2019, 'Ohana Zone programs administered by the Coordinator enable the counties to adopt innovative approaches to address homelessness in their individual communities and assisted the counties in leveraging additional capital funds through the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC). Through the ['Ohana Zone pilot program](#), the Coordinator directly contracts with the four counties to administer a range of homeless shelter and housing programs. As of November 30, 2020, Ohana Zones served 3,216 individuals statewide, including 625 individuals (20%) placed into permanent housing.

More recent examples of collaboration with the counties include the [Behavioral Health & Homeless Statewide Unified Response Group \(BHHSURG\)](#), and monthly homeless funders meetings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the BHHSURG conducted [weekly webinars](#) to disseminate information, and established statewide hubs for [distribution of Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#). In addition, the homeless funders group has examined the different payors and funding streams for homelessness services to facilitate identification of service gaps, overlap, and time-limited funding, as well as opportunities for increased alignment. 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](#).

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator will continue actively partnering with the four counties on strategies to further strengthen collaboration and to effectively address regional needs, including an assessment of additional resources that may be required.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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



SB221 SD1

RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Ke Kōmike Hale o ke Olakino, ka Lawelawe Kānaka, a me ka Pilikia Ho‘okuewa
House Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Malaki 16, 2021

9:30 a.m.

Lumi 329

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB221 SD1, which would allow the Governor’s Coordinator on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Hawai‘i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), to develop plans for the coordination of services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations in each county, to address community concerns regarding houselessness and to meet the needs of each county’s respective houseless population. **OHA supports this measure as a means to more effectively meet the needs of individuals experiencing houselessness, including the disproportionate number of Native Hawaiians who may be experiencing or at a heightened risk of experiencing houselessness.**

OHA has long advocated for improved access to housing and housing-related services for Native Hawaiians. For example, OHA staff have consistently participated in HICH, and have supported working groups, task forces, and other initiatives to address our islands’ housing challenges and the needs of houseless people. OHA also supports and funds a range of programs and services to meet the needs of houseless and housing-insecure Native Hawaiians, and has invested over \$40 million over the past decade in programs and services aimed at improving the housing and financial security of our beneficiaries.

Unfortunately, Native Hawaiians continue to be disproportionately represented among people experiencing houselessness and may be at higher risk of becoming houseless. Native Hawaiians have less financial security and are less likely to weather financial emergencies than the general population: Native Hawaiians have a lower per capita income (\$25,590) in comparison to the total state population (\$35,255), as well as a lower median household income (\$75,708) compared to the total state population (\$80,212).¹ In fact, 12.3% of all Native Hawaiians live in poverty, compared to 8.8% of the total state population.² Native Hawaiians’ economic vulnerability and housing insecurity may have also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the year-

¹ OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS, ISSUE BRIEF: COVID-19 AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN COMMUNITIES: NATIVE HAWAIIANS OVER-REPRESENTED IN COVID-19 AT-RISK POPULATIONS (2019). available at https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Issue-Brief.-Covid-19_corrected.pdf.

² *Id.*

long shutdown of our service and tourism industries that had previously employed a substantial percentage of Native Hawaiian workers.³

Enacting SB221 SD1 would allow for OHA and our state and county partners to more effectively plan for and implement coordinated strategies to meet the needs of our houseless population, including a potentially disproportionate number of Native Hawaiians experiencing houselessness, or who may be at heightened risk of experiencing houselessness.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB221 SD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

³ *Id.*

To: Committee on Health, Human Services & Homelessness

Hearing Date/Time: Tuesday, March 16th 2021 9:30 AM

Re: Comments on SB221

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) would like to offer comments on SB221 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. 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.

HHRC 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 HHRC.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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

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 12, 2021

To: Representative Ryan Yamane, Chair
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Testimony in Support of SB 221 SB 1 Relating to Homelessness

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 221 SB 1 Relating to Homelessness

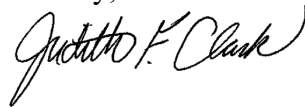
Homelessness does not have one size fits all solutions. Each community and each subpopulation has differing issues and needs. Communities and counties have differing resources to apply to the problem. Thus, developing plans for each county and for communities within those counties makes sense.

Children and youth, especially those who living on the streets without support or guidance from their families, are the most vulnerable and invisible segment of our homeless population. Plans to address homelessness must consider their specific needs, which are quite different from families and solo adults.

Youth homelessness providers must be included in the plan development process. Hawaii Youth Services Network will participate if this bill is passed.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

COMMENTS for: SB 221 SD1: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Representative Ryan I Yamane, Chair, Representative Adrian Tam, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee Health, Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Tuesday, 3/16/21; 9:30 am; via Videoconference

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Members, Committee on Health, Human Services and Homelessness:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments for SB 221 SD1, which would allow the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop plans for the various counties to coordinate services and shelters to meet the concerns and needs of communities impacted by homelessness. I am Rob Van Tassell from Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii 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 Hawaii. **Our current homeless programs work very closely with the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, 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.

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.

For questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org



COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES, & HOMELESSNESS

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

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 221 SD1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

By
Samuel L. Kaolulo
Student
of
University of Hawaii

Tuesday, March 16, 2021
9:30 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 329

Aloha,

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Tam, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Samuel Kaolulo, and I am a student at the University of Hawaii and a concerned constituent of my community from the Kapolei community. I am testifying in favor of Senate Bill 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.

As a constituent and a future Social Work practitioner I have seen homelessness grow rapidly in the Kapolei/Makakilo area. However, it has been a crisis for the past decade and would continue to advocate for improved access for affordable housing and housing-related services to help the homeless population. For example, I am a great example of someone that transition from a homeless transitional shelter to a permanent housing and would like see more programs and services to help others make that transition like myself.

Again, my name is Samuel Kaolulo a graduate student at the University of Hawaii and I am in strong support and urge the Committee to PASS Senate Bill 221 SD1. Mahalo nui for allowing me the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,
Samuel Kaolulo

SB-221-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2021 8:34:23 AM

Testimony for HHH on 3/16/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Enacting SB221 SD1 would allow for state and county partners to more effectively plan for and implement coordinated strategies to meet the needs of our houseless population, including a potentially disproportionate number of Native Hawaiians experiencing houselessness, or who may be at heightened risk of experiencing houselessness.

Representative Ryan I. Yamane, Chair
Representative Adrian K. Tam, Vice Chair
Committee on Health, Human Services, & Homelessness

Annie Chang
SB 221 SD 1, Relating to Homelessness
Tuesday, March 16, 2021
9:30 AM in 329 Via Videoconference

To: Chair Yamane and Vice Chair Tam

Aloha, my name is Annie Chang and I am a student here at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. I am testifying in support for the Senate Bill 221 SD 1 regarding homelessness.

Homelessness has been an ongoing concern for many years in the State of Hawai'i, mainly in Honolulu. However, although I may not be too familiar or knowledgeable regarding the status or rates of homelessness on the neighbor islands, I believe that it is important that our state and home develops several programs that will help assess and address all needs of homeless individuals, groups, families, and communities.

Although there have been previous pilot programs to help with decreasing homelessness in Hawai'i, more continuous services should be provided that anyone who is currently experiencing homelessness can easily access or seek support. Increasing collaboration with organizations and agencies to implement new outreach programs or creating extra shelter homes with necessities that can be utilized to their convenience.

In addition to extra shelter and outreach services, educational programs that provide resources or services to assist with employment finding, resume building, and other services that can assist with the basic needs of getting back on their feet. We can never assume what situation they may be in or why they are in that particular situation. However, advocating for them and letting them know that the state, organizations, agencies, and other people willing to help them with the appropriate resources could give them an idea of where to begin to seek help if they choose to.

In conclusion, I truly believe that it is important that this bill is passed to help the homeless population and community not only in Honolulu or Oahu but overall, within the State of Hawai'i.

Thank you,
Annie Chang

SB-221-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2021 11:44:05 PM

Testimony for HHH on 3/16/2021 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jennifer Azuma Chrupalyk	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Whoever has been leading this initiative hasn't been too effective in doing their job. First of all, the cost of living exceeds most pay rates. If you want to end homelessness, fix the corruption in the system because corruption is expensive. Then, instead of cutting educational costs, invest in our students. Lastly, raise minimum wage.