



**SB221 SD1**  
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS  
Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Ki‘ina Hana a me nā Kumuwaiwai

Pepeluali 26, 2021

9:30 a.m.

Lumi 211

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 Native Hawaiians 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.

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).<sup>1</sup> In fact, 12.3% of all Native Hawaiians live in poverty, compared to 8.8% of the total state population.<sup>2</sup> Native Hawaiians’ economic vulnerability and housing insecurity may have also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the year-long shutdown of our service and tourism industries that had previously employed a substantial percentage of Native Hawaiian workers.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 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](https://19of32x2yl33s8o4xza0gf14-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Issue-Brief.-Covid-19_corrected.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

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.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

February 25, 2021

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 221 SD1– RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Friday, February 26, 2021, 9:30 a.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211  
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.

# HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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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

February 24, 2021

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, 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 Relating to Homelessness

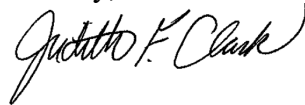
Homelessness does not have one size fits all solutions. Each community and each subpopulation has differing issues and needs. Communities and counties have differing resources to apply to the problem. Thus, developing plans for each county and for communities within those counties makes sense.

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.

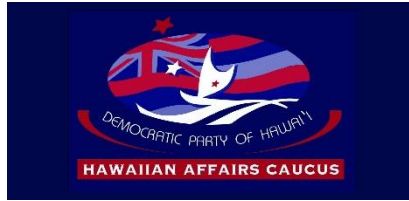
Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director

**LATE**



February 25, 2021

COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Testimony SUPPORTING SB 221

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee:

The Hawaiian Affairs Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly SUPPORTS SB 221 to engage the Hawai'i interagency council on homelessness to coordinate the services and shelter facilities of public agencies with nonprofit organizations in every County to meet the needs of our communities impacted by homelessness.

As we know, homelessness is a growing problem in Hawai'i that we have not been able to address at a meaningful level. The number of homeless families has increased each year and will continue to increase as we face COVID and the economic hardships it has created.

To succeed in addressing the homelessness problem in Hawai'i, a comprehensive, coordinated effort is required. Coordination among government agencies and nonprofit organizations is the only way we can start to make a positive impact with our homeless situation. Passage of SB 221 will help us to move in that direction.

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

**LATE**



**Ho'omau Ke Ola**  
"to perpetuate life as it was meant to be"

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SB 221 SD1– RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Friday, February 26, 2021, 9:30 a.m. Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211 VIA VIDEO  
CONFERENCE

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

**Ho'omau Ke Ola's Testimony in Strong Support**

Ho'omau Ke Ola is a substance and drug abuse rehabilitation program that was created by Native Hawaiians in 1987 and continues to work with the Private and Public Sector through Managed care, State and County Departments and other outreach agencies. As recent as 2018, HKO brought our concerns to the Governor's Coordinator, the Lt. Governor Josh Green, the City and County of Honolulu – Department of Community Services to ask for help to resolve the growing numbers of homeless in our rural regions on the west side of Oahu, in hopes there could be more done to help us help our people. We currently work with government agencies that help transition the incarcerated and those who come from the courts needing treatment versus incarceration and others who are struggling with behavioral issues where substance abuse leads to homelessness and the combination of these choices become their only respite.

The 2019 Point in Time Count identifies the Substance abuse use among the homeless, 50% of the Adult Homeless on the west side suffer from substance abuse and are categorized as Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. The 2020 Point in time count could not be taken because of COVID 19, we have no idea today, how many more are truly in need of real care.

"The legislature believes that the severity of homelessness necessitates increased collaboration among the State, counties, neighborhood boards, and nonprofit organizations."

"We "must" may develop plans for the city and county of Honolulu and the counties of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui 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 of regions within each county."

"Each county plan shall identify regions within each county and the specific goals and objectives for each region. County coordinators shall take into account the concerns of communities impacted by homelessness and the needs of the homeless population of each region."

Please pass SB221 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Juanita Mahienaena Brown Kawamoto

President

Ho'omau Ke Ola

Board of Directors