

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2007

Honolulu, Hawaii

JAN 31 2022

RE: S.B. No. 206
S.D. 2

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 206, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO RENTAL DISCRIMINATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to prohibit discrimination in real estate transactions and requirements, including in advertisements for available real property, based on participation in a housing assistance program or requirements related to participation in housing assistance programs.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawaii Public Housing Authority; Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness; Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities; Hawai'i Civil Rights Commission; one member of the Honolulu City Council; Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Catholic Charities Hawai'i; Partners In Care; Hope Services Hawai'i, Inc.; Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center; Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; The Radical Hale; and one individual. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS.

Your Committee finds that low-income individuals, who are the most likely participants in housing assistance programs, experience extreme difficulty in finding affordable rentals in



Hawai'i and are often faced with discrimination based on their source of income. Your Committee further finds that discrimination against recipients of housing assistance programs is prohibited in twelve states and the District of Columbia, as well as numerous cities and counties throughout the United States. Your Committee additionally finds that a prohibition against discrimination based on participation in a housing assistance program or requirements related to participation in a housing assistance program does not alter or restrict the standard industry practices to vet prospective renters. However, since there is no general federal law that prohibits discriminating against a tenant based on "source of income", this discrimination continues to widely occur. This measure is critically necessary to break down this significant discriminatory barrier to accessing affordable housing and to improve geographic mobility for low-income families.

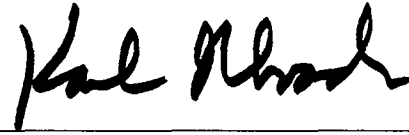
Your Committee notes that during the ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, reluctance to rent to clients in housing assistance programs has adversely impacted the utilization of new federal resources, such as the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) and the United States Department of Treasury Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA). For example, even though seven hundred and eight EHVs have been allocated statewide in Hawai'i since mid-2021, only thirty-six of those households have been able to find housing as of January 20, 2022. With limited search periods to lease with a voucher of normally sixty or ninety days, refusal to accept an EHV or other voucher can cause people to lose their rental assistance and extend situations of housing insecurity and homelessness. In addition, providers have shared stories of homeless individuals who were approved for prospective rent through ERA after eviction from a prior unit and are not able to find a landlord willing to accept this assistance in a new unit.

Your Committee has amended this measure by inserting additional findings to further clarify this measure's importance.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 206, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 206, S.D. 2.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



