

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of **Nani Medeiros**  
Chief Housing Officer, Office of the Governor

Before the  
**House Committee on Housing**  
Wednesday, February 8, 2023  
9:30 a.m., Via Video Conference  
Conference Room 312

In consideration of  
**House Bill No. 1244**  
**RELATING TO HOUSING**

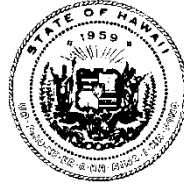
Aloha Chair Hashimoto, Vice-Chair Aiu and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 1244. The administration supports the additional funding to the state rent supplement program. Historically the program has received about a million dollars annually. In the executive biennium budget request, we included \$13 million for the program over the biennium, \$6.5 million in each year of which \$500,000 may be for increased administrative costs to HPHA. We would appreciate the committee's support of our budget request and we support this measure.

Mahalo,

Nani Medeiros

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY  
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 17907  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO:

Statement of  
**Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director**  
**Hawaii Public Housing Authority**

Before the  
**House Committee on Housing**

9:30 a.m., February 8, 2023  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Room 312

In consideration of  
**HB 1244**  
**RELATING TO HOUSING**

Honorable Chair Hashimoto and members of the House Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 1244, relating to housing.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) is in **strong support** of HB 1244 which would appropriate funds for the State Rent Supplement Program (RSP).

The RSP is a State-funded program originally established to assist middle- to low-income families who were not at immediate risk of homelessness, but still struggled with the high cost of living in Hawaii. It was also meant to specifically prioritize assistance to teachers, policemen, and firemen. The program was later amended to include very low-income families with a maximum rental subsidy of \$500. The HPHA has found the RSP to be among its most impactful and cost-effective programs at keeping participants stably housed.

Historically, the RSP has been funded on a reoccurring basis each fiscal biennium or fiscal year. The program currently requires approximately \$500,000 for the upcoming fiscal year to retain the current number of participants and assist additional participants that were added onto the waitlist that was opened in August of 2022. If the Legislature wishes to expand the program,

the HPHA estimates that an appropriation of \$1,000,000 and 1.0 FTE for a Public Housing Specialist II will be needed for an additional 250 families.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the committee with its testimony regarding HB 1244. We thank you very much for your continued and dedicated support.



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1244: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: House Committee on Housing

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i

Hearing: **Wednesday 2/8/23; 9:30 AM; CR 312 & via videoconference**

Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair Aiu, and Members, Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in Strong Support of HB 1244**, which appropriates funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) for the State Rent Supplement Program. I am Rob Van Tassell with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners In Care.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 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. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i has worked for many years with the Rent Supplement Program and have found it to be a very successful program for our clients. Struggling families find this shallow subsidy to be the difference between financial insecurity and stable housing, between constant worry about how to pay the rent and being able to focus on improving their lives, educating their children and enjoying life. Our working families are struggling to remain in Hawaii. This monthly rental assistance (up to \$500/month) would help to offset the high inflation and rising rents that create a double whammy for families. Funding to expand this shallow subsidy program and serve more people, would be a godsend to the families of Hawai'i.

*Hawaii Perspectives 2019*, a large survey of Hawaii voters, reported that "compared with 2015, far fewer Hawaii voters think they are "better off" than they were 12 months prior (35% vs 51% in 2015). An amazing 45% of residents may leave Hawai'i largely due to the cost of living, and housing is of high concern. The Report found that "Voters say to improve life, make it more affordable." In this environment, the **State Rent Supplement Program is important not only to the families it will help stabilize, but for the overall State efforts to improve living conditions for our residents.**

This shallow subsidy would help families that are closer to self-sufficiency but still have a gap between their incomes and the cost of a rental. We urge your support for this bill that closes the affordability gap, and lessens economic insecurity.

Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 373-0356 or [alohabettylou@hotmail.com](mailto:alohabettylou@hotmail.com) if you have any questions.



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Phone (808)373-0356 • [bettylou.larson@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org](mailto:bettylou.larson@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org)





**LATE**

Testimony to the House Committee on Housing  
Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 9:30 am  
Via Videoconference, Conference Room 312

### HB 1244, Relating to Housing

Dear Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair Aiu, and members of the Committee on Housing,

We are in **strong support** of HB 1244, which appropriates funds for the state rent supplement program. There are many families across Hawai'i who have the financial means to pay for housing, but still can't quite afford a place to live, due to the state's high cost of living. Providing a "shallow" subsidy, such as the state rent supplement program funded by HB 1244, can help those families quickly exit homelessness or remain in stable housing.

Family Promise of Hawai'i is a nonprofit working to prevent and end homelessness for families with children. From our perspective as a frontline service provider, the need is clear for rent subsidies is clear. An estimated **1 in 30 young children in Hawai'i experience homelessness** annually, according to the latest federal estimate<sup>1</sup>. Children under age 1 in the US are more likely to experience homelessness than people of any other age<sup>2</sup>. In just the state's public schools alone, the Hawai'i Department of Education counted 3,254 students who experienced homelessness in the 2021-22 school year<sup>3</sup>.

Shallow subsidies would be particularly impactful for children and their families. **39% of all children in Hawai'i live in households with a high housing burden**<sup>4</sup>. Among children in low-income households in Hawai'i, 70% have a high housing cost burden<sup>5</sup>. These are children and families on the precipice of homelessness, which is a traumatic experience that can have long-lasting impacts on children's health and well-being. Helping families with children remain stably housed, or quickly return to permanent housing, would be a critical outcome of HB 1244.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan Catalani".

Ryan Catalani  
Executive Director

<sup>1</sup> Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles: <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles-2021.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Research on Early Childhood Homelessness: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/research-early-childhood-homelessness>

<sup>3</sup> Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/data/>

<sup>4</sup> KIDS COUNT Data Book: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7244-children-living-in-households-with-a-high-housing-cost-burden?loc=13&loct=2#detailed/2/13/false/2048,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/any/14287,14288>

<sup>5</sup> KIDS COUNT Data Book: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/71-children-in-low-income-households-with-a-high-housing-cost-burden?loc=13&loct=2#detailed/2/13/false/2048,1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867/any/376,377>

**HB-1244**

Submitted on: 2/5/2023 1:24:09 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/8/2023 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Will Caron          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Hawai‘i has one of the highest rates of houselessness per capita of any state in the nation. Hawai‘i also has the highest rate in the nation, per capita, of chronically unsheltered houseless people. According to the Hawai‘i Homelessness Initiative Point in Time Count for 2020, an estimated 6,458 people live on the streets and in shelters in Hawai‘i.

Addressing homelessness requires a multi-faceted approach that uses interventions targeted to the characteristics of the population being served. The state rent supplement program for homeless families and individuals is critically necessary to address homelessness.

The state rent supplement program provides an ongoing subsidy, enabling houseless families or those at imminent risk of houselessness to close the affordability gap, maintain housing, and maintain stability. Please support HB1244.

**LATE**

**HB-1244**

Submitted on: 2/7/2023 9:24:49 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/8/2023 9:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Valerie Wayne       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Supporting the state rent supplement program through appropriating funds to the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority makes good sense right now, given how many in our community are at risk of being houseless. I strongly support this bill.