

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



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 6, 2024

To: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2186 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: Thursday, February 8, 2024, 9:45 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and offers comments.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to require DHS to develop a safe parking program allowing unsheltered persons who sleep in their vehicles to park overnight on state lands. Requires a report to the Legislature.

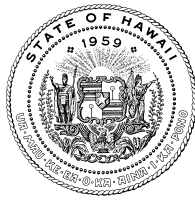
The Department understands the need to innovate and expand options for unsheltered persons to access services and housing and recognizes that many individuals are living in vehicles parked on public streets and parks. The development of a safe parking program will require consultation with communities, providers, and other State and County agencies. At a minimum, DHS will need planning funds and time to understand the resources and costs required to run an effective program. Similar programs proposed in other jurisdictions have encountered issues with illegal vehicles, individuals operating a vehicle without a valid driver's license, security, providing necessary hygiene facilities, and providing a variety of services on

site. A safe parking program should be a part of a larger strategy to develop long-term housing options for individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

DHS notes that the Statewide Office on Homelessness & Housing Solutions (SOHHS) is implementing the Ohana Zone Pilot Program, a supportive housing pilot, and Kauhale to scale longer-term housing for individuals experiencing homelessness statewide. DHS is focused on working with SOHHS to develop the Kauhale initiative and supportive housing efforts and to keep a focus on permanent housing as the end goal of homelessness. Additionally, DHS requested an increase in funds in the executive budget for homeless services contracts to assist community providers in meeting the increased costs of providing needed services, and we ask the Legislature to support our budget request.

If this measure proceeds, DHS will require additional resources to procure professional services to assist with the planning and development of the proposed program. As the bill progresses, DHS will provide an estimate of the planning resources needed to implement this measure. We also request an extended effective date.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

**House Committee on Human Services**

Thursday, February 8, 2024

9:45 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

**In Support of**

**H.B. No. 2186, Relating to Homelessness**

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato and members of the Committee:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience (OWR) in the Governor's Office supports the intent of H.B. No. 2186, Relating to Mental Health Treatment, however, OWR defers to the Department of Human Services (DHS) on the measure.

Established through Act 291 (Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022) the overall aim of the OWR is to make Hawai'i a trauma-informed state. OWR is focused on breaking down barriers that impact the physical, social and emotional well-being of Hawai'i's people and explores avenues to increase access and availability to mental, behavioral, social, and emotional health services and support.

H.B. No. 2186 proposes DHS and OWR coordinate with homeless service providers to determine needed services for unsheltered persons who sleep in their vehicles and park on state lands overnight. We believe the delivery of needed services to a vulnerable population, in a trauma-informed manner, is important to help make all communities in Hawai'i trauma-informed.

We understand that the delivery of these much-needed services involves multiple agencies and we look forward to discussion on how the State can best deliver these services.

Trauma-informed care (TIC) is an approach to understanding and responding to the widespread impact of trauma. By passing this bill, the State would be upholding the TIC principles of Safety, Peer Support, Empowerment, and Voice and Choice, which strengthens our pathway towards a trauma-informed state. As such, the OWR supports the intent of H.B. 2186.

Mahalo

Tia L R Hartsock, MSW, MSCJA  
Director, Office of Wellness & Resilience  
Office of the Governor

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
KA 'OIHANA MĀKA'I O HONOLULU  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**  
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DEPUTY CHIEFS  
HOPE LUNA NUI MĀKA'I

OUR REFERENCE **CR-MO**

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Human Services  
House of Representatives  
415 South Beretania Street, Room 329  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Marten and Members:

**SUBJECT: House Bill No. 2186, Relating to Homelessness**

I am Clifford Ramson, Captain of the Major Events Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD opposes House Bill No. 2186, Relating to Homelessness, and submits the following comments and recommendations for your consideration.

This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a safe parking program, allowing unsheltered persons who sleep in their vehicles to park overnight on state lands and requires a report to the legislature.

This bill in its current form contradicts Section 291C-112, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which restricts certain uses of parked vehicles between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. Exemptions already exist to allow for human habitation in parks, camps, and other recreational areas, provided it complies with the law and relevant regulations or under emergency circumstances in the interest of vehicular safety.


Additionally, implementing the safe parking program may unintentionally encourage vehicle habitation in residential and commercial areas. This could lead to increased noise and complaints, sanitation and trash-related issues, and other challenges affecting the quality of life for residents and businesses.

The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair  
and Members  
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Further, enforcing these provisions may pose challenges due to limited staffing and resources. Specialized towing equipment and services may be required, and the securing of additional parking and storage spaces could prove logistically and financially taxing.

The HPD urges you to oppose House Bill No. 2186, Relating to Homelessness, and thanks you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

  
Clifford K. Ramson, Captain  
Major Events Division

APPROVED:

  
Arthur J. Logan  
Chief of Police

# PARTNERS IN CARE

*Oahu's Continuum of Care*

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

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE INTENT OF HB 2186: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: House Committee on Human Services  
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)  
Hearing: **THURSDAY, 2/8/24; 9:45 am; CR 329 or via videoconference**


Chair Martin, Vice Chair Amato and Members of the Committee on Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT OF THE INTENT OF HB2186: Relating to Homelessness** which shall establish safe zones for those experiencing homelessness.

Partners In Care (PIC) is a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers, individuals with lived experience and concerned organizations across O'ahu. While we support the intent of this measure, we believe there needs to be funds attached to these safe zones in order to provide services, security and hygiene stations. For those experiencing homelessness they are often in areas across the island based on their support network and it may not be close to one of the designated safe zones. Emphasis needs to remain on the creation of truly affordable housing and support for our neighbors on the streets, whether they are in their vehicles or unsheltered on our streets.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and comments in support of the intent of HB 2186. Please do not hesitate to reach out to PIC for any additional information.

Mahalo,



Laura E. Thielen  
Executive Director  
Partners In Care – O'ahu Continuum of Care

**HB-2186**

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 8:36:27 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/8/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Connie Mitchell	The Institute for Human Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IHS, The Institute for Human Services supports the intent of this measure.



**LATE**

Committee: Human Services  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference  
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT to H.B. 2186 Relating to Homelessness with an Amendment**

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i SUPPORTS **H.B. 2186** which requires the Department of Human Services to develop a safe parking program allowing unsheltered persons who sleep in their vehicles to park overnight on state lands. Requires a report to the Legislature.

The ACLU of Hawai'i is committed to working collectively with governmental and community stakeholders to **Reimage Public Safety**. We advocate for the State to shift spending priorities away from criminalization and incarceration towards evidence-based investments in housing, education, employment, violence prevention, restorative justice and culturally appropriate health and human services in our communities.

Hawai'i has one of the highest rates of houselessness in the United States, with Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders composing the largest group of unhoused residents. Rather than focus on the root causes of this racialized crisis, public officials have treated houselessness as a crime, tasking local police departments with sweeping, citing, and arresting unhoused individuals at alarming rates. As a result, far too many people experiencing houselessness in Hawai'i have harmful interactions with the police instead of or before getting access to housing and health services. The efforts of public officials to rebrand these sweeps—whether using Orwellian terms like “compassionate disruption” or simply offensive terms like “sanitation outreach”—do nothing to change the illegal, unconstitutional, and counterproductive nature of these actions.

Instead of sweeps, we advocate for data-driven solutions to eliminate houselessness.<sup>1</sup> As noted in the **Decriminalizing Houselessness in Hawai'i Report** by Asha DuMonthier, multiple strategies exist to decriminalize houselessness and invest in solutions that promote racial equity.<sup>2</sup>

**Houseless advocates in Hawai'i have advocated for safe zones and safe parking programs with supportive services for years.** Research of existing safe parking

<sup>1</sup> <https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/solutions/creating-systems-that-work/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.acluhi.org/sites/default/files/field\\_documents/houselessnessreport\\_0.pdf](https://www.acluhi.org/sites/default/files/field_documents/houselessnessreport_0.pdf)



zones in other jurisdictions demonstrate that they address a genuine community need. People living in their vehicles survive in a perilous position. Living in a vehicle is often criminalized. This enhances the risk of accumulating fines, and possible loss of their vehicle and their ability to work. Thus, safe parking zones is a one strategy to prevent individuals from slipping into further hardship -with the ultimate goal of permanent affordable housing.

### **Proposed Amendment**

We recommend an amendment to ensure that the Department of Human Services and Office of Wellness and Resilience's detailed plan includes a requirement to consult with directly impacted people and to include safe parking programs within the neighbor island counties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **H.B. 2186**.

Sincerely,

### ***Carrie Ann Shirota***

Carrie Ann Shirota  
Policy Director  
ACLU of Hawai'i  
[cshirota@acluhawaii.org](mailto:cshirota@acluhawaii.org)

*The mission of the ACLU of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the U.S. and State Constitutions. The ACLU of Hawai'i fulfills this through legislative, litigation, and public education programs statewide. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving Hawai'i for over 50 years.*

**HB-2186**

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 9:38:46 AM

Testimony for HUS on 2/8/2024 9:45:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Toby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Considering the severity of the homelessness crisis, the tenuousness of most people's housing, the prevalence of cars, the erratic weather, and the potential safety of being able to park a car in a patrolled area can not only prevent crime, it can allow at least a feeling of marginally increased safety. While I am very much in support of the bill, it is important that the areas are utilized for sleeping purposes only and do not turn into encampments. People need to be responsible for their trash, their behavior, and conduct. If they were to turn into encampments, it would aggrieve citizens more so and cordon off places that are enjoyed by the public. The areas need to be selected carefully, they need to be accessible, they need to be safe, and they need to be patrolled. It is of the utmost importance that women in particular feel safe in the designated areas. This can either be achieved by a law enforcement officer or someone appointed by DHS. It is crucial that these places do not go unchecked, lest we end up with another encampment with high rates of overdose and violence.