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Testimony of **John Mizuno**
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness
Before the
House Committee's on Housing/ Health and Homelessness
February 14, 2024
9:30 a.m., Conference Room 312

In consideration of
House Bill No. 2326
RELATING TO OHANA ZONES

Aloha Chair Evslin, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Aiu, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB2326 which appropriates funds to the Governor for the Ohana Zones program. This measure is aligned with Governor Green's priorities on homelessness, which includes an emphasis on **non-traditional housing to quickly house people experiencing homelessness.**

The Ohana Zones program provides an essential source of funding for innovative approaches to house people experiencing homelessness, and to fill gaps in housing and services that do not fit with other sources of funding. Additional Ohana Zones funds will be essential to fill such gaps, and to support existing efforts.

I commend the legislature for its prior investments into Ohana Zones and appreciate any future support.

Mahalo,

John Mizuno
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

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February 12, 2024

TO: The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Housing
The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Alice L. Lee
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
HB2326, RELATING TO OHANA ZONES**

I **support** this measure to appropriate funds to the Governor for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program.

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. As stated in Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018, the goal of the Ohana Zones Pilot Program is to improve the health and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness and provide individuals experiencing homelessness with needed services. During the Coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, the program enabled the State and counties to be more nimble in their response and quickly add shelter capacity.
2. The need for the flexibility and innovation provided by the Ohana Zones Pilot Program is especially critical given housing's rising costs and decreased inventory.
3. Appropriate levels of funding for this program can allow the program to broaden its reach. I would also ask that the Legislature explore ways in which the program can assist with the transitional needs of Maui wildfire victims.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2326: RELATING TO OHANA ZONES

TO: House Committees on Housing, and Health & Homelessness
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/14/24; 9:30 AM CR 312, & videoconference**

Chair Evslin, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Aiu, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members, Committees on Housing, and Health & Homelessness

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 2326**, which appropriates funds to the governor for the Ohana Zones pilot program. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

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 children, families, elders, 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.

We are a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition. We encourage the Legislature to support the Department of Health's and Department of Human Services' budget requests which includes additional funding for rate increases for purchase of service contracts for service providers.

The [Hawai'i True Cost Coalition](#) is comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state. We have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations

Catholic Charities Hawai'i supports this bill and respectfully urges you to include adequate funding for the true cost to operate these services. The Ohana Zone projects implement a creative mix of housing and services to move vulnerable homeless persons off the streets. These projects were built upon the strengths of the local communities that know their needs. The original funding offered opportunities to respond to these needs in new and creative ways. Ohana Zones have demonstrated that addressing the issue of homelessness on the local level is effective. Hundreds of beds were added to the homeless services network across the State of Hawai'i, including new initiatives like tiny homes.

Local communities all over our State are demanding action to end homelessness. We urge your support for these initiatives that have been proven effective and which allow for new approaches to solve our homeless crisis.

We urge you to fund Ohana Zones as one tool to end homelessness. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.



Hawai`i True Cost Coalition

DATE: February 14, 2024
TIME: 9:30AM
PLACE: Via Videoconference and Conference Room 312
BILL: HB2326, Relating to Ohana Zones
Committee: House Committee on Housing and House Committee on Health & Homelessness

Aloha Chairs Evslin and Belatti, Vice Chairs Aiu and Takenouchi, and members of the Committees,

On behalf of the Hawai`i True Cost Coalition (TCC), we are writing in support of HB2326 which would appropriate funds to establish the Ohana Zones Pilot Program.

The TCC is comprised of over 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai`i nonprofit organizations.

We support the bill as funding will not only be used for facility construction, but also staffing, administrative costs, and most importantly the provision of services. Too often funding for services is overlooked or added on as an afterthought. Ensuring adequate funding for services is fundamental for a successful program.

We also encourage the Legislature to support the Department of Human Services' and Department of Health's budget requests which includes increased funding for other purchase of service contracts that have also not been increased in many years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2326.