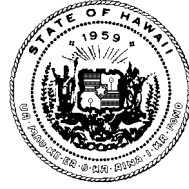


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

April 5, 2022

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB2150 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES**

HEARING: Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 1:30 PM
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and provides additional comments. The Department respectfully requests that passage of this measure does not replace or adversely impact budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistance For Other Needy Families (TAONF) participants who are participating in the First-To-Work (FTW) program. Appropriates funds. Effective 12/31/2050. (HD1)

The SD1 amended this measure by:

1. Inserting an appropriation amount of \$3,557,520 necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to fund the housing assistance subsidies for the TAONF program from the general revenue of the State;

2. Inserting an appropriation amount of \$16,206,480 necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to fund the housing assistance subsidies for TANF program participants from the federal funds received by the State;
3. Inserting an appropriation of \$200,000 necessary for the Department of Human Services to make enhancements to its case management and payment system to implement this measure;
4. Inserting an effective date of December 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
5. Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

The SD2 amended this measure by:

1. Changing the appropriation amounts to unspecified sums; and
2. Making technical nonsubstantive changes for purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The HD1 amended this measure by:

1. Deleting the exemption for the expenditure of funds for the administration of housing assistance subsidies from the Hawaii Public Procurement Code and purchases of health and human services law; and
2. Making technical nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

This measure will provide additional housing support to TANF and TAONF recipients while engaging in FTW activities such as education, vocational training, job readiness services, community work experience, and employment. With the pandemic, housing costs in Hawaii have increased while wages have not kept up with inflation. Housing stability, especially for families with children, supports a family's health and well-being, children's or parents' educational and career success, and strengthens communities. Furthermore, this measure will allow the State to access available TANF funds and ensure equity amongst eligible families.

As of February 2022, there was an average of 4,396 TANF recipient families and 1,021 TAONF recipient families. About 62% of recipient families received less than 24 months of benefits and about \$686 of financial assistance benefits per month. Of the recipient families, an average of 2,826 TANF recipients, or 86%, and 464 TAONF recipients, or 14%, participated in the FTW program. Approximately 68% of FTW participants were from single-parent households.

DHS projects that if 3,290 TANF and TAONF FTW participants were issued a monthly housing assistance subsidy of \$500, this would total \$1,645,000 a month, or \$19,740,000 annually. DHS estimates that \$16,976,400 in federal TANF funds are required to cover the costs for TANF recipients, and \$2,763,600 in State general funds are necessary to cover the cost for TAONF recipients. An additional \$200,000 in federal TANF funds will be needed to cover the cost of system modifications.

The Department requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

Lastly, DHS respectfully requests an amendment that measure becomes effective upon approval.

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

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2150, S.D. 2, H.D. 1

April 6, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

Senate Bill No. 2150, S.D. 2, H.D. 1, amends Section 346-261, HRS, to:

1) authorize the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families households participating in the First-To-Work Program; and 2) require TANF expenditure plans developed pursuant to Section 346-51.5, HRS, to account for the subsidies. The bill also appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds and an unspecified amount of federal funds in FY 23 to DHS to fund the subsidies and appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds in FY 23 to DHS to make system changes to facilitate the subsidy payments.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriations in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**SB2150, SD2, HD1
RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES.**

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka ‘Oihana ‘Imi Kālā
House Committee on Finance

‘Apelila 6, 2022

1:30 p.m.

Hālāwai Keleka‘a‘ike / Lumi 308

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB2150, SD2, HD1, Relating to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. This measure authorizes and appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to provide additional housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to recipients of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families, who participate in the First-To-Work Program

During the pandemic, Temporary Assistant for Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistant for Other Needy Families (TAONF) were lifelines to needy families. In fiscal year 2021, over 20 thousand individuals (or 6,790 cases), including nearly 13 thousand children, received TANF/TAONF on average each month. In June 2021, 29% of participants were Native Hawaiian.¹ Comparatively, in FY 2019, less than 12 thousand individuals (or 4,371 cases) participated in TANF/TAONF on average each month.²

The dramatic increase in TANF and TAONF cases is evidence of how precarious living circumstances are for Hawai‘i families. This is unsurprising considering 42% of Hawai‘i households and 54% of Native Hawaiian households had incomes below the ALICE threshold in 2018.³ Unfortunately, economic recovery from the pandemic will likely follow trends seen after the Great Recession, harming lower income families more and for longer than higher income households. Fear of homelessness will only worsen our state’s chance to recover as one.

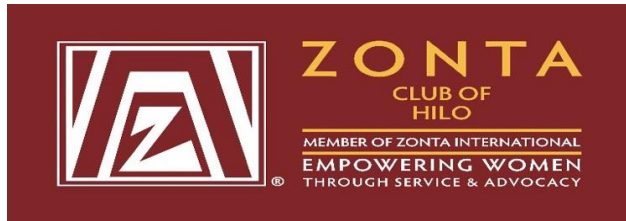
By utilizing the potential of TANF and TAONF, DHS can help provide stability for families as they seek opportunities to build back their self-sufficiency. OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB2150, SD2, HD1. Mahalo piha for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Hawai‘i Department of Human Services, Databook, December 2021.

<https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/DHS-Databook-20212.pdf>

² Hawai‘i Department of Human Services, Databook, January 2020. <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/DHS-Databook-2019-FINAL.pdf>

³ DHS Databook, 2021



April 4, 2022

House Finance Committee

DATE: April 6, 2022, Hearing
TIME: 1:30 PM

To: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, Representative Kyle R. Yamashita, Vice Chair, and Committee Members

RE: Zonta Club of Hilo SUPPORTS SB 2150, SD 2, HD 1 and companion bill HB 2233 HD1, SD1, Relating To Temporary Assistance To Needy Families

The Zonta Club of Hilo supports **SB 2150, SD2, HD 1**, and its companion **HB 2233 HD1, SB1**. Both bills “crossed over” and both bills were heard by the subject matter Committees and recommended for passage.

The Zonta Club of Hilo is part to of an international network of professionals who support empowering women and girls, worldwide and locally. We support SB 2150, SD 2, HD 1 and HB 2233, HD1, SB 1, purpose and intent “to authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) and temporary assistance for other needy families (TAONF) program participants who are also participating in the First-to-Work program.”

Testimony submitted by DHS and the Governor’s Coordinator On Homelessness provide more details of those served and impact of the State’s high housing costs.

The State’s TANF’s Funds has a surplus to address the funding amounts recommended by the Director of Human Services. These costs would be: : 1) an appropriation amount of \$19,168,020 necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to fund the housing assistance subsidies for TANF program participants from the federal funds received by the State; 2) an appropriation of \$3,925,980 in State general funds necessary to cover the cost for TAONF recipients; and 3) an appropriation amount of \$200,000 necessary for the Department of Human Services to make enhancements to its case management and payment system to implement this measure.

Hawaii continues to be ranked with Tennessee in the amount unspent funds as a share of annual block grant. Earlier, Hawaii had \$352 million in unspent funds, which is 357% of the annual block grant. In 2019, the state had more than \$338 million available. In 2020, that increased to \$364 million. Currently, it’s \$405,437,243. Here’s why \$400M in federal funds available for needy Hawaii families is going unspent.

<https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2022/01/08/heres-why-400m-federal-funds-available-needy-hawaii-families-is-going-unspent/>

Hawaii continues to gain negative recognition for the unspent TANF Funding. TANF: Hawaii Hoards \$364M Federal Welfare Money > Hawaii Free Press
<http://www.hawaiifreepress.com/Articles-Main/ID/29886/TANF-Hawaii-Hoards-364M-Federal-Welfare-Money>

Under federal law these funds may only be used for: (1) assisting needy families so children can be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives; (2) reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) preventing pregnancies among unmarried persons; and (4) encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families and therefore cannot be redirected to other economic needs in the state. *

Needy Families of Immigrants are covered by TAONF, which funds come from state, not federal, dollars. However, Hawaii has a practical approach to handling immigrants considering Hawaii's history and connections to these nations. Without these supports, these families would find themselves homeless and unable to engage ways to support themselves economically and provide safe homes for their dependent children.

The First To Work program provides case management, employment and support services to work eligible individuals of TANF households. TANF has time limits to aid. In addition, the FTW Program services other work eligible individuals that are unable to work due to temporary disability, rehabilitation from substance abuse, and with domestic violence status. Single women with children continue to be disproportionately represented in these eligible categories, particularly when domestic violence is involved.

The Zonta Club of Hilo supports **SB 2150, SD 2, HD 1**. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

Mahalo,
Zonta Club of Hilo Legislative Advocacy Committee
Charlene Iboshi

Zonta International is a leading global organization of professionals empowering women worldwide through service and advocacy. Zonta International envisions a world in which women's rights are recognized as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential. In such a world, women have access to all resources and are represented in decision making positions on an equal basis with men. Our membership includes both current and former small business owners in Hilo.

*Arloc Sherman and Tazra Mitchell, "Economic Security Programs Help Low-Income Children Succeed Over Long Term, Many Studies Find," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, July 17, 2017.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, "A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty," 2019. Greg Duncan and Katherine Magnuson, "The Long Reach of Early Childhood Poverty," *Pathways*, Winter 2011.



Hawaii
Children's Action Network Speaks!
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Finance

Re: **SB 2150, SD2, HD1 – Relating to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**
Hawai'i State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 329
April 6, 2022, 1:30 PM

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in SUPPORT of SB 2150, SD2, HD1, relating Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. This bill would authorize the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families (TAONF) program participants who are participating in the First-to-Work program as well as appropriate funds.

It is well known that Hawai'i has the highest housing costs in the nation. According to the National Low-Income Housing Coalition, the "housing wage" needed to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Hawai'i in 2021 was \$28.86. Meanwhile, the average renter's wage didn't even come close, at \$17.56 per hour.¹

It is also well established that housing instability has harmful effects on children's health and educational outcomes² and that the stresses of childhood poverty have both immediate and long-term effects on keiki's physical and mental health, behavioral self-control, academic achievement, and earnings as adults.³

That's why providing housing assistance subsidies to our state's TANF and TAONF participants is so important, both to address our current homelessness crisis, and also to ensure better long-term outcomes for our keiki.

And we can afford it. Hawai'i has more than \$350 million in unspent TANF reserve funds, which is more than three times our annual TANF block grant – in fact, we rank second in the nation for the most unspent TANF funds as a share of the annual block grant.⁴ That's the equivalent of \$2,923 per person living in poverty in Hawai'i, which places us among the three states with the most TANF reserve funds per person living in poverty.⁵

With so many of our state's families struggling to make ends meet, this is the time to spend down those funds. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,
Nicole Woo, Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/hawaii>

² <https://housingmatters.urban.org/articles/how-housing-affects-childrens-outcomes>

³ <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2014/06/childhood-poverty>

⁴ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/to-promote-equity-states-should-invest-more-tanf-dollars-in-basic>

⁵ <https://www.propublica.org/article/states-are-hoarding-52-billion-in-welfare-funds-even-as-the-need-for-aid-grows>

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Authorize DHS to Provide Housing Assistance Subsidies to TANF or TAONF Participants

BILL NUMBER: SB 2150 HD 1

INTRODUCED BY: House Committees on Housing and Health, Human Services & Homelessness.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Authorizes the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families participants who are participating in the First-To-Work program.

Our view is that we have been leaving too much TANF/TAONF money on the table and need to put that money to good use here.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 346-261, HRS, to allow DHS to provide eligible households receiving benefits under the temporary assistance for needy families (TANF) or temporary assistance for other needy families (TAONF) programs with housing assistance subsidies of up to \$500 per month during their participation in the first-to-work program. Any plan for expenditure of TANF funds developed pursuant to section 346-51.5 shall be updated to account for expenditures for housing assistance subsidies.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 31, 2050.

STAFF COMMENTS: One of the ways our government provides a safety net for those less fortunate is through a program called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF. TANF was enacted in 1996 as a program that replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which used to provide cash assistance to families with children experiencing poverty. Under TANF, the federal government provides a block grant to the states, which then use these funds to run their own programs. To receive federal funds, states must also spend some of their own dollars on those programs and face severe fiscal penalties if they fail to do so. This state-spending requirement, known as the “maintenance of effort” (MOE) requirement, replaced the state match that AFDC required.

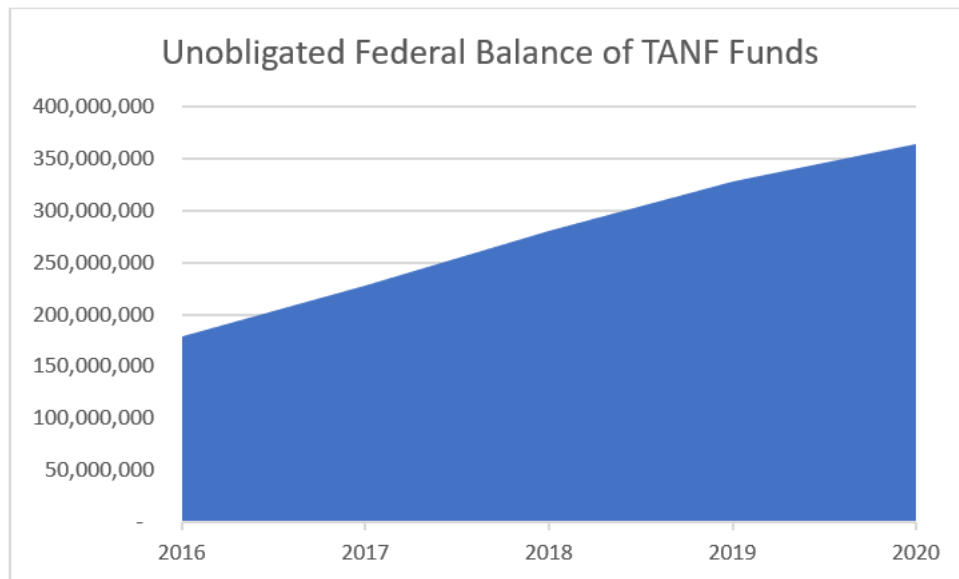
States can use federal TANF and state MOE dollars to meet any of the four goals set out in the 1996 law: (1) assisting needy families so children can be cared for in their own homes or the homes of relatives; (2) reducing the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) preventing pregnancies among unmarried persons; and (4) encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

These goals are broad, giving states lots of freedom to use these federal dollars in a way that they think brings about positive outcomes.

So what have we done with the federal TANF money?

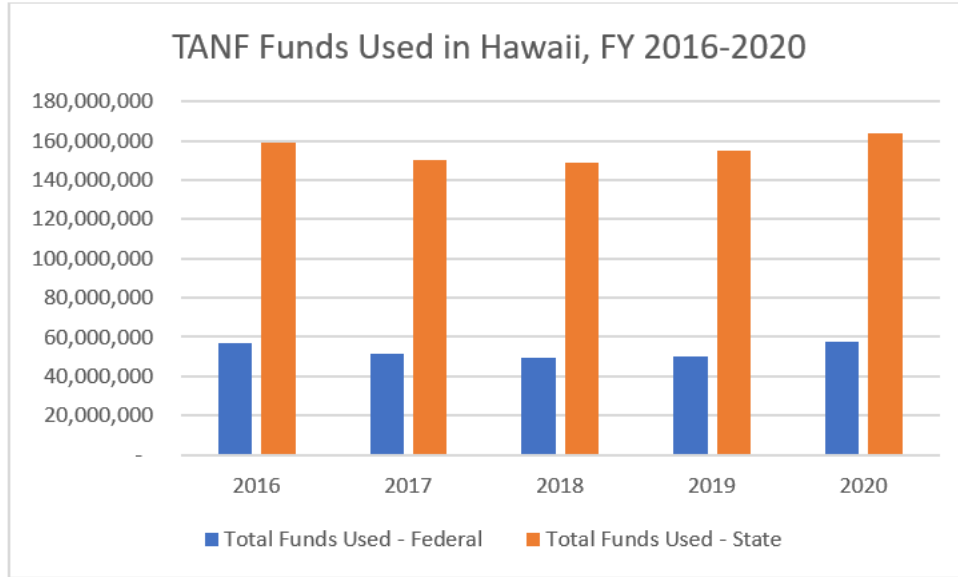
We've let lots of it pile up unused.

ProPublica, a nonprofit newsroom that investigates abuses of power, recently published an unflattering article that calls out several states for doing nothing at all with large sums of money. It reports: "According to recently released federal data, states are sitting on \$5.2 billion in unspent funds from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF. Nearly \$700 million was added to the total during the 2019 and 2020 fiscal years, with Hawaii, Tennessee and Maine hoarding the most cash per person living at or below the federal poverty line."



As this graph shows, the “unobligated balance” of the federal block grants, meaning federally authorized money that we haven’t spent, has been rising steadily over the last five fiscal years. In federal fiscal year 2020 (the year starting Oct. 1, 2019, and ending Sept. 30, 2020), our unobligated balance was \$364 million, equivalent to almost \$3,000 per person living in poverty.

Certainly, we have been using part of the TANF money. But we have been spending quite a bit of our own funds:



According to ProPublica, a Hawaii state spokesperson said that our state government plans to use its surplus to extend employment services like job coaching and placement for noncustodial parents who have children receiving TANF and to provide diaper assistance to families that are eligible for the program. The state is also considering increasing benefits and offering monthly housing assistance.

The question, however, is why has it taken so long for our bureaucrats to come up with ways to put that money to good use? It certainly won't help alleviate poverty if it's sitting in some bank somewhere.

Digested: 4/4/2022



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2150, SD2, HD1: RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 4/6/22; 1:30 pm; via videoconference**

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in Strong Support of SB 2150 SD2, HD1**, which authorizes and provides funding for the Department of Human Services to provide housing assistance of up to \$500 per month to TANF and TAONF participants who are in the first-to-work program. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners In Care (PIC). **This bill is a critical step forward in enabling the very poorest of families with children to have a chance to obtain housing and to stabilize their family long term.**

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.

In 2021, Catholic Charities Hawai'i helped over 70 families on TANF to search for housing including 24 homeless families in our Family Assessment Center. This bill would greatly assist these families and other TANF/TAONF families to both locate housing and increase their housing stability. The first-to-work program helps these families to support their children by preparing for, accepting and retaining employment. With our high cost of living, work income is stretched very tight for rent and the many other costs of raising a family in Hawai'i. The rules for first-to-work allow participants to receive housing assistance. However, the maximum is one payment not exceeding two months of rent. While this may assist the family to first obtain housing, we also need to improve these families' ability to continue paying rent without constant shortages or fear of homelessness. A rental subsidy of up to \$500/month could make their lives stable instead of remaining in crisis each month, struggling to pay their ongoing rent

Providing an ongoing rental subsidy is an excellent way to expend some of the TANF funds which are currently going into a reserve fund. Approximately \$57 million goes into this fund annually. Funding would be well spent to maximize the housing stability of these families during their temporary stay on TANF. Without constant economic stress, these families could focus on their children, their work, and their health which often is impacted by economic stress and especially homelessness. The long-term impact of these new rental housing subsidies would be great.

We urge your support for this bill. Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 373-0356 or alohabettylou@hotmail.com if you have any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 373-0356 • bettylou.larson@CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

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

TESTIMONY IN SPPORT ON SB 2150 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

TO: House Committee on Finance,
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)
Hearing: Wednesday, April 6th, 2022, 1:30PM
Position: **SUPPORT**

Chair Luke and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Partner In Care, Oahu's Continuum of Care, stands in support of **SB 2150 SD1 HD1 RELATING TO TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES.**

Partners In Care appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2150 SD1 HD1. Rental costs in Hawaii prevent many of our families from attaining and maintaining housing. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families provides an essential resource to enable families to maintain their housing in our communities. Extending the time frame for this program will make a huge difference in so many lives across Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testifying in support of this measure. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Aloha

SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 3:05:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rozlyn Calderon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/4/2022 3:45:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kekoa Bruhn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of the SD2 version of this bill.

SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:17:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chase	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kahului, HI 96732

March 3, 2022

Hawaii State Legislature

Dear Committee Members,

Aloha, my name is Chase, and I am writing to support bill SB2150 regarding affordable housing. I support this bill because my family and I feel that housing is a struggle to own. Even though we don't own the most excellent house, our home still costs a lot to keep. It also costs a lot to buy a new home.

Many people who live in Hawaii are either homeless or moving away from the islands just because they can't afford to live here. If you look at the statistics of the average price of a house in Maui, it is a little over \$1,000,000. Comparing it to other states like Texas, the average cost of buying a home is just under \$400,000. That is about \$600,000 cheaper than Hawaii.

I suggest that the residents of Hawaii that have low incomes should get benefits to help support payments for housing. Since the price of living is rising, it makes it harder for families to afford essentials to live. With covid also being a factor, many families don't work or lost their jobs. Because of this, they are struggling to afford their own homes. Even without covid, prices of housing went up. It would be great if local residents gain benefits without giving them to people buying houses coming from the mainland. With my thoughts being considered, please pass the bill SB2150.

Aloha,

Chase

SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:17:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kahului, HI, 96732

March 3rd, 2022

Hawaii State Legislature

Dear Committee Members,

Hello, my name is Kanoa, and I am writing a letter supporting the Hawaii Legislative Bill, SB2150, on the topic of affordable housing in Hawaii. I want to introduce myself and the situation that I and many others face with housing affordability and making a comfortable living in Hawaii. I live with my parents in a two-bedroom home that we are currently renting. We have a household of 4 and are now planning on moving to the mainland because of the high prices of homes here in Maui. My whole family and I prefer to stay here in Maui because this is our area, and we spent most of our lives living in Hawaii, but with the housing prices being so high, it is hard to find a place to settle down in.

I will now talk about the significant affordable housing problem here in Hawaii. Prices are way too expensive for the quality and housing space of accommodation here in Hawaii. Raising a big family and finding a household with enough room in Hawaii is especially difficult because it is hard to find a good price home with enough rooms for the family. It is also difficult for people who want to move out of their family home and start living independently. On average, a one-bedroom apartment rent can range from 1500 to 2000 dollars a month. With Hawaii also being one of the highest income tax states, finding a place to live alone or start a family most times may be difficult.

A solution I believe would be beneficial to many in Hawaii is Bill SB2150. The bill will assist families having financial troubles and help pay off housing. If families meet the requirements, they can get financial aid by getting five hundred dollars to help with their subsidies. Five hundred dollars can help many families struggling financially and help pay off rent and use that extra five hundred dollars to spend on food and such. I am asking for this Bill to be passed regarding affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Kanoa

SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:18:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wailuku, HI 96793

March 3, 2022

Hawai'i State Legislature

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Kamana and I am writing in support of SB2150; the bill which if passed will give those in the First-To-Work program up to \$500 in housing assistance. Growing up in and out of homelessness with my single mother here in Maui I have seen firsthand the immense need for affordable housing. After years on the waiting list for HUD, we finally were able to settle down in a comfy two-bedroom apartment, but since then my mother has had to declare herself disabled and unable to work. Even though she is unable to work there has been an increase in rent which our benefits used to cover but for an unknown reason, they stopped. She is in the process of getting social security but that will take about 5 months before we even get a response which lead to us having to ask for help from family just to be able to have a house.

More now than ever there is an uproar in homelessness and the need for affordable housing is at the highest it's been in years. Not only is the cost of living on our beautiful island one of the highest in America, but the pandemic has also made things even more challenging as families are still trying to rebuild. To live in Hawaii it really takes two incomes to afford a decent place to live and if you have kids it's almost impossible. My mother's and I's story is actually one of the happier ones that I've heard, as in the past most single moms end up moving to a cheaper place away from their real homes. Throughout the years I have personally seen my mom go through some really rough times and at some points, we didn't know if we would make rent. There are so many other families out there just like mine who would benefit from that extra \$500.

Therefore, I strongly ask for your committee to pass SB2150 in order to help all of the struggling families and give them a breather so they can focus on just that, being a family. Another suggestion would be to have immediate help while you wait to hear back because during that time the stress it puts on parents leaves more than just an emotional toll.

Aloha,

Kamana

SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:20:51 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
viliami	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kahului, HI 96732

March 3rd, 2022

Hawai'i States Legislature

Dear Committee Members,

Hello, my name is Viliami, and I am writing in regards to Bill SB2150 D1 which is about affordable housing. Before I voice my concerns about this bill, I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. I am part of a family of 14, and I am 17 years old. I love the sport of football and I love the sense of being with and helping families and friends. Growing up in Hawaii, our house was always chaotic with limited space. There were families who would move into our house and we don't mind it because we were helping others. My parents hate seeing people camping because house prices are too high here in Hawaii, so they offer our rooms to the families, and we'll squeeze in the garage or living rooms. This bill is really important to me and to others here in Hawaii because families are becoming homeless because of the house prices increasing.

Based on research, in order to afford the necessities here in Hawaii, you need to be working a full-time job with a minimum wage of 17 to 18 dollars. Keep in mind that is just the necessities alone, which is about 35 to 36 thousand dollars a year, which doesn't include house payments, mortgages, or rent. Lots of people can't work because of the fear of covid, vaccination mandates, or other personal problems. Overall, house prices are skyrocketing at the moment, and it's causing a great problem, mostly for us locals.

Please pass the bill SB2150 D1. This bill can help families to get back onto their feet and help them from losing their homes or getting kicked out of their rentals. This bill can feed many children who starve because they know their parents are doing their best to provide a roof over their heads at the expense of providing food. People think the government is only the punisher and executioner, but I think they are the heroes who protect and serve this country.

Sincerely,

Viliani

SB-2150-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/5/2022 1:25:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/6/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Galen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kahului, HI 96732

March 3, 2022

Hawai'i State Legislature

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Galen, and I am writing in support of bill SB2150. I am a dedicated student and athlete at a public high school who's lived all my life on Maui. I have personally seen and known people who have been affected by the issues of affordable housing here in Maui. A close family member of mine has personally been affected by this, and is forced to live in a small 2 bedroom rental home. It's enough to live a normal life, but given their current financial situation, the aspiration of acquiring anything beyond that is not possible due to the immense prices of homes.

As most living on Maui know, the cost of living in an average-sized home has exponentially increased over time, and has caused many to either move off-island or live in lower standards. The average prices now have neared or transcended a million dollars. The cost to keep a home often has many families working many jobs or giving up leisures just to have a roof over their head. In combination with the expenses on necessities like food and water, it should not be an issue that needs to be considered. Although it is true that everyone's financial situation is different, the excessive pricing of homes affects everyone, whether it be good or bad, severe or mild. I may only have a visual of the issues on Maui, but I am sure it is a recurring problem throughout all of Hawaii.

In supporting this bill, I believe that the issues revolving around affordable housing can be diminished. As of right now, there is no way to lower the costs of housing due to inflation and the rising demand in the economy. So in order to combat this current issue, the best option is to encourage and temporarily assist those in need. This is exactly what the bill enforces, in addition to preparing those for employment. How an individual's financial situation after the assistance plays out is determined by themselves, but the jumpstart of assistance the state can provide will be worth the attempt. Most individuals will use the

assistance to get out of any negative monetary situations and can use that opportunity to gain financial stability that will lead to a hopeful improvement over their quality of life. As for the increasing home prices, that is a problem too widespread and rapid to tackle, so to reduce homelessness and to improve the quality of life for those in extreme to mild poverty, this bill, SB2150, would be the best option to pursue such a goal.

Sincerely,

Galen