

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 8, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2207– RELATING TO THE HAWAII INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 3:30 p.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports this measure.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to add a representative of an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member on the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH).

The Coordinator currently serves as Chair of the HICH, which is a 27-member advisory council, that advises on statewide planning and policy development with broad representation from state and county government and the community. Currently, there is no specific representation for the LGBTQ+ community on the council.

According to the [Partners in Care Sexual and Gender Minorities 2020 Sub-Report¹](#) for the Oahu Point in Time (PIT) count, 94% of sexual and gender minorities experiencing homelessness on Oahu were unsheltered in January 2020. Sexual and gender minorities is an umbrella term that encompasses individuals identifying as LGBTQ+ and individuals whose sexual orientation or gender identity varies. The Partners in Care sub-report found that sexual and gender minorities experiencing homelessness have higher rates of disabling conditions compared to the overall homeless population. For example, nearly half of sexual and gender

¹ Report available at:

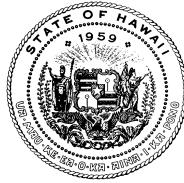
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5db76f1aadbeba4fb77280f1/t/5f3dab1d2185484ea4ca0578/1597877022199/SGM+Sub-Report+2020+Final.pdf>.

minorities experiencing homelessness reported a physical, developmental, or other disability that impaired their daily life.

The addition of a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization would add value to the HICH. A designated representative would enable clear community feedback regarding the development of programs to better meet the unique needs of sexual and gender minorities experiencing homelessness.

If this measure proceeds, the Legislature may consider adjustments to the budget to support this addition of a new member to the HICH, as the addition of a new non-governmental member may add ongoing operational costs. Per [section 346-382 \(b\), Hawaii Revised Statutes](#), non-governmental members of the HICH shall be reimbursed for expenses, including travel expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



LATE

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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WRITTEN
TESTIMONY ONLY

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2207
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON HOMELESSNESS

THE HONORABLE SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: February 8, 2022

Room Number: 225

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (Department) **SUPPORTS** this Measure for
2 the following reasons:

3 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health is in **STRONG SUPPORT** of SB2207,
4 which would consider the needs of houseless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from
5 an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on
6 Homelessness.

7 This bill is important because LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately affected by homelessness,
8 as compared to non-LGBTQ+ youth. The “Hawai’i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report”
9 2018

10 ([https://health.hawaii.gov/surveillance/files/2018/09/HawaiiSexualandGenderMinorityHealthRep](https://health.hawaii.gov/surveillance/files/2018/09/HawaiiSexualandGenderMinorityHealthReport2018.pdf)
11 [ort2018.pdf](https://health.hawaii.gov/surveillance/files/2018/09/HawaiiSexualandGenderMinorityHealthReport2018.pdf)) presented data from the 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, showing that
12 transgender youth in Hawaii are eight times more likely to have unstable housing than cisgender
13 youth. Youth who are LGBTQ+ are more likely to be kicked out of their homes due to family
14 members who are homophobic or transphobic, or feel that their homes are not a safe, affirming
15 environment, therefore they are more likely to experience homelessness. According to Oahu’s

1 2020 Point in Time Count report on sexual and gender minorities, 39% of LGBTQ+ houseless
2 people experienced homelessness before the age of 18. Half of the LGBTQ+ people surveyed in
3 this report had a serious mental illness. ([https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-
4 2020-Final.pdf](https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-2020-Final.pdf)).

5 For these reasons, the Department strongly supports SB2207, which will create a position on the
6 Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness to be filled by a representative from an LGBTQ+
7 focused organization.

8 **Offered Amendments:** None.

9 **Fiscal Implications:** None for the Department of Health (DOH).

10 Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2207

TO: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, & Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 8, 2022 (3:30 PM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **strongly supports** SB 2207, which would add a representative of an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member on the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Representation matters. A key component of harm reduction is to include impacted persons in discussions around programs and policies designed to serve them. In this case, it is important to include the needs of trans and LGBTQ persons experiencing housing instability, including unsheltered homelessness. Trans and LGBTQ persons face range of minority stressors, including structural stigma and internalized shame, that can better inform the policymaking process around homelessness services delivery.

HHRC Executive Director Heather Lusk currently serves as Board Chair of [Partners in Care O'ahu](#), a planning, coordinating, and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within O'ahu's continuum of care for homeless persons. HHRC currently provides outreach and housing placement and navigation services for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness who are trans and LGBTQ. We also helped to ensure that gender identity and sexual orientation were included the Point-in-Time survey of O'ahu's unsheltered homeless population.

HHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 1:21:41 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michael Golojuch Jr	Testifying for Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	Yes

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

The Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i (formerly the LGBT Caucus) Hawai'i's oldest and largest policy and political LGBTQIA+ focused organization fully supports SB 2207.

We hope you all will support this important piece of legislation.

Mahalo nui loa,

Michael Golojuch, Jr.
Chair and SCC Representative
Stonewall Caucus for the DPH



Aloha for All is Good Business

February 5, 2022

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT OF SB 2207 Relating to the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness

Dear Senators,

The Hawaii Rainbow Chamber of Commerce has a mission to educate and advocate for the advancement of equality of economic and societal opportunities for Hawaii's LGBTQ+ community.

With this mission, we STRONGLY support that the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness include adding a representative of an LGBTQ+ focused organization to be a member of that Council. As you are aware, many studies have shown a disproportionately high number of those experiencing homeless, whether youth or adults, identify as LGBTQ+, which presents an additional set of challenges and concerns. The LGBTQ+ homeless community needs to have dedicated advocacy on its behalf at all levels in working towards solutions.

Particularly concerning is the hugely disproportionate numbers, perhaps 40% of homeless youth, who identify as LGBTQ+. These young people in particular face long-term consequences of homelessness and are at much greater risk in their mental and physical health, higher risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, and greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, amongst other social concerns.

As these young people age, it has been found that they naturally experience lower levels of educational attainment, placing them at an even greater long-term disadvantage when they enter the job market with fewer formal skills and education. Growing up without the stable housing, supportive family structures and regular social support of course results in longer-term detrimental issues known by all in the field.

As various levels of government and nonprofits join together to work towards solving this complex issues, we ask that due to the disproportionately high numbers of people experiencing homelessness who identify as LGBTQ+ that a representative of an LGBTQ+ focused organization be a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Winston Welch
President, Hawaii Rainbow Chamber of Commerce



7 February 2022

Members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

As an emerging grassroots network striving to bring people together across Oahu's north and windward shores in to ensure that the region that we call home is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive of LGBTQ+ individuals, the North Shore Ko'olau Diversity Collective offers its Strong Support of SB2207.

As the text of the bill makes clear, the problems and challenges of homelessness are particularly acute for LGBTQ+ youth. It is essential, therefore, that an organization experienced in understanding and serving the needs of this population be represented and involved as a formal member of the Hawaii interagency council on homelessness.

Wherever and whenever decisions are being made, nothing about us without us.

Thank you for your attention and leadership on these concerns,

*Joe Wilson, Liz Rago, Michelle Johnson Blimes,
Hao Le, Bethany Berry-Weiss, Kunane Dreier, Torrey Lock*
Organizing Committee



SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 10:00:07 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jo-Ann M Adams	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately part of the homeless population as banished or unwelcome in their parents' homes. It is appropriate "to specifically consider the needs of homeless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii interagency council on homelessness".

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:57:07 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, and HMS Committee Members,

As a public health professional and concerned community member, I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2207, which would consider the needs of houseless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

This bill is important because LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by homelessness. According to Oahu's 2020 Point in Time Count report, 39% of LGBTQ+ houseless people experienced homelessness before the age of 18. Half of the LGBTQ+ people surveyed in this report had a serious mental illness. (<https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-2020-Final.pdf>). The "Hawai'i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report" in 2018 also showed that transgender youth in Hawaii are eight times more likely to have unstable housing than cisgender youth.

Mahalo,

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:10:54 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikos Leverenz	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Ihara, & Members of the Committee:

I support SB2207, which would consider the needs of houseless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Far too many LGBTQ+ youth face housing instability due to their family's responses to their sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as behavioral health issues that can emerge due to abuse, stigma, and other indicia of minority stress. Even in 21st Century Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 10:57:34 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Tiare Sua	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2207, which would consider the needs of houseless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

This bill is important because LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by homelessness. According to Oahu's 2020 Point in Time Count report, 39% of LGBTQ+ houseless people experienced homelessness before the age of 18. Half of the LGBTQ+ people surveyed in this report had a serious mental illness. (<https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-2020-Final.pdf>). The "Hawai'i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report" in 2018 also showed that transgender youth in Hawaii are eight times more likely to have unstable housing than cisgender youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Tiare Anelaokalani Kima Sua

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:59:38 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kevin Tomita	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2207, which would consider the needs of houselessLGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

This bill is important because LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by homelessness. According to Oahu’s 2020 Point in Time Count report, 39% of LGBTQ+ houseless people experienced homelessness before the age of 18. Half of the LGBTQ+ people surveyed in this report had a serious mental illness. (<https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-2020-Final.pdf>). The “Hawai’i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report” in 2018 also showed that transgender youth in Hawaii are eight times more likely to have unstable housing than cisgender youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 2:57:53 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Sarah Rosenbach	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2207, which would consider the needs of houseless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

This bill is important because LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by homelessness. According to Oahu's 2020 Point in Time Count report, 39% of LGBTQ+ houseless people experienced homelessness before the age of 18. Half of the LGBTQ+ people surveyed in this report had a serious mental illness (See <https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-2020-Final.pdf>). The "Hawai'i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report" in 2018 also showed that transgender youth in Hawaii are eight times more likely to have unstable housing than cisgender youth. My own research with RYSE shows that houseless LGBTQ+ young people in Hawai'i are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence, survival sex, and crime victimization than their heterosexual, cisgender houseless peers. Houseless LGBTQ+ young people were also more likely to report being unable to continue with school, find work, and access other programs or services due to the COVID-19 pandemic than their heterosexual, cisgender houseless peers.

All of these statistics paint a picture of a group that is in need of specialized care to address health and social disparities. A representative from an LGBTQ+-focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness is needed to support to unique needs of this population.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Sarah Rosenbach

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura

Senator Les Ihara, Jr.

Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 1530 HST

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2207 Relating to the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness

Aloha Chair Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Les Ihara, Jr., and the members of the Committee on Human Services:

Mahalo for hearing SB2207 relating to the right to exit the sex trade. I am writing in **strong support** of SB2207.

“Representation” is a popular word right now, but what exactly does it mean? One of the most common errors I see is the use of tokenism being rebranded as “representation.” The difference between tokenism and representation is autonomy and agency, the ability to make decisions. Adding a representative of an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness is the only way homeless LGBTQ+ people will have proper representation.

There are nuances that apply to LGBTQ+ unhoused neighbors that anyone outside of that group will not be privy to. For example, LGBTQ+ youth are far more likely to become homeless due to their gender identity and sexual orientation. Additionally, transgender women are disproportionately represented in the sex trade and the rate of femicide.

As long as homelessness exists in our society, LGBTQ+ people will be disproportionately represented in that community. Having one seat on the Hawai'i Interagency Council for an LGBTQ+ member is the bare minimum, and a crucial first step needed to come up with equitable solutions for our LGBTQ+ unhoused neighbors.

Mahalo for considering my testimony,

Soon Kim

Senate District 15

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 7:21:47 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kylie Akiona	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

LATE

Aloha e Chair Buenaventura & Vice Chair Ihara,

My name is Kylie Akiona, and I am writing in **strong support of SB2207**, which would consider the needs of houseless LGBTQ+ youth by requiring a representative from an LGBTQ+ focused organization as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness.

This bill is important because māhū/LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be affected by houselessness. According to Oahu’s 2020 Point in Time Count report, 39% of LGBTQ+ houseless people experienced homelessness before the age of 18. Half of the LGBTQ+ people surveyed in this report had a serious mental illness. (<https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/s/SGM-Sub-Report-2020-Final.pdf>). The “Hawai’i Sexual and Gender Minority Health Report” in 2018 also showed that transgender youth in Hawaii are eight times more likely to have unstable housing than cisgender youth.

Please vote yes on SB2207 for the safety of our māhū youth.

Mahalo nui for your consideration,

Kylie Akiona

SB-2207

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 8:24:05 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/8/2022 3:30:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support. Including a representative from the LGBTQ+ community as a member of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) will enhance solutions to prevent and end homelessness, assuring that this group is not overlooked in the HICH's strategies to prevent and end homelessness.