

*The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-First Legislature, 2022 Regular Session**

**Senate Committee on Ways and Means**  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 10:05 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211  
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

by:

Rodney A. Maile  
Administrative Director of the Courts

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**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 2370, S. D. 1, Relating to Homelessness.

**Purpose:** Establishes the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions within the Department of Human Services to be headed by the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness. Establishes the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund and appropriates \$2,000,000 out of the general fund revenues, to be expended by the Department of Human Services for the administration of the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions. (S.D. 1)

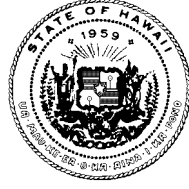
**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary strongly supports Senate Bill No. 2370, S.D. 1, in recognition of the critical need to establish a permanent office on homelessness and housing solutions, as well as providing stable funding for the office to carry out its responsibilities.

A permanent office on homelessness and housing solutions will be able to provide statewide leadership, coordination, and collaboration of all programs that have responsibilities to address homelessness and housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Senate Bill No. 2370, S.D. 1.

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

February 21, 2022

**TO:** The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

**FROM:** Cathy Betts, Director

**SUBJECT: SB 2370 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: February 23, 2022, 10:05 am  
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure and provides comments. The Department requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace a priority identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this measure is to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions within the Department of Human Services to be headed by the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness. Establishes the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund and appropriates \$2,000,000 out of the general fund revenues, to be expended by the Department of Human Services for the administration of the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions. (SD1) The SD1 amended the measure by:

- (1) Establishing the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions within the Department of Human Services rather than the Department of Budget and Finance;
- (2) Clarifying that disbursements from the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund to public and private agencies involved in homelessness and housing solutions be in accordance with chapter 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, rather than chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

While the Department appreciates these amendments, the Department would like to clarify a misstatement of the Department's testimony in the STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2407 stating that the Department,

"recommended that the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions be established as an administratively attached agency to the Department of Human Services, rather than the Department of Budget and Finance, to ensure its independence and authority as provided in this measure."

The Department's testimony did not recommend creating an administratively attached agency within the Department, as the Coordinator and the HICH are already administratively attached within the Department per section 346-381, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). As previously stated, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness is a unique position that currently has the mandate and authority to lead the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), a cross-sector, inter-government advisory council in shaping and executing the State's strategy to end homelessness. DHS agrees with the proposal that the Coordinator's office staff should eventually be permanent positions exempt from Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). However, the measure does not establish positions or appropriate funds for the positions.

The Coordinator and the HICH have implemented innovative programs, supporting the continued development of the coordinated entry system, shifting to a Housing First approach, and successfully implementing the Ohana Zones pilot program projects. During the pandemic, the Coordinator and staff worked with homeless service providers, the Counties, the Judiciary, and other executive departments to address the needs of Hawaii's homeless or houseless residents. Notably, the Coordinator facilitates regular training for the community to keep abreast of the latest COVID-19 strategies. The cross-sector collaboration led by the Coordinator, the HICH, in close partnership with the Continuum of Care providers, was built and strengthened on the existing organizational and statutory structure. The Coordinator also provides a very detailed report to the Legislature as required by 346-381, HRS.

However, if the Legislature wants to add to the Coordinator's responsibilities and authority, for clarity, it may want to consider including new material in sections 346-381 thru 346-383, HRS, instead of creating a new part that describes similar and related duties.

Regarding funding, DHS has long maintained that funding for homeless services should become part of the executive's base budget instead of non-recurring year-to-year funding. If the current budget remains intact, State Fiscal Year 2023 will be the first year that homeless services funds, for Family Assessment Centers (1,550,000), Housing First Program (3,750,000), Rapid Re-Housing Program (3,750,000), and Homeless Outreach And Civil Legal Services (1,750,000), will be part of the DHS base budget per Act 8, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2021.

Along with predictable funding for services, continued investment is needed by the State and Counties to increase the low-income rental and permanent supportive housing inventory so residents at risk for homelessness and housing instability can live in real homes and not have to survive in shelters. Housing inventory for Hawaii's lowest-income residents requires public financing. If the Legislature intends that the Coordinator have more capital improvement responsibilities, the Coordinator will likely need additional professional staff who have background and experience in finance and housing development. The Department also supports Hawaii Public Housing Authority's funding requests in the executive budget to maintain and redevelop its housing inventory and properties.

The Department appreciates the intent to provide additional funds for innovation for housing solutions; however, DHS agrees with the comments of the Department of Budget & Finance regarding the establishment of special funds per section 37-52.3, HRS. The proposal to establish a special fund for homelessness and housing solutions with general funds will not necessarily be sustainable or different than a direct appropriation, especially as a portion of the special fund will pay the special fund assessments unless the Legislature exempts the special fund. Additionally, special funds have additional reporting requirements. Therefore, a direct appropriation would be a more practical and efficient use of general funds and staff time than to place general funds in a special fund.

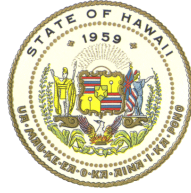
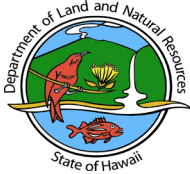
Also, to clarify, currently, there is no ohana zone fund or housing first fund that is part of the DHS base budget. The ohana zones pilot program is funded through Act 209, SLH 2018, as amended by Act 128, SLH 2019, and the housing first program is funded as part of program ID HMS 224 in the executive budget. In addition, the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation administers the rental housing revolving fund, not DHS. Also, as provided by

section 201H-202, HRS, the rental housing revolving fund is a source of capital for affordable rental housing projects; it is not necessarily a source for low-income or permanent supportive housing projects.

Lastly, DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce a priority identified in the executive budget.

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

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of  
SUZANNE CASE  
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Wednesday, February 23, 2022  
10:05 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 211, Via Videoconference**

**SENATE BILL 2370, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Senate Bill 2370, Senate Draft 1 proposes to establish an Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions (Office) and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund and provide stable staff and funding, allowing the State to make long-term investments in strategies to reduce homelessness. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

Senate Bill 2370, Senate Draft 1 will stabilize funding and staffing for the overall coordination of homelessness in Hawaii. The current Governor's Office on Homelessness (Governor's Office) provides strategic guidance, oversight and coordinates homeless strategies for departments with homeless on their properties. The Department uses the services of the Governor's Office regularly. As a land management agency, the Department has no staff with expertise in addressing the many needs of homeless, including applying for documents, mental health issues, regular health issues and many more. The Governor's Office is crucial in making these connections for the homeless on Department lands.

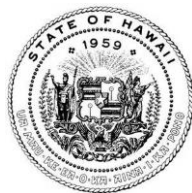
Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this measure.

**SUZANNE D. CASE**  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**ROBERT K. MASUDA**  
FIRST DEPUTY

**M. KALEO MANUEL**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

February 23, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: **SB 2370 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 10:05 a.m.  
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

**POSITION:** The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this bill, respectfully offers comments, and suggests amendments. If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator requests that the measure's passage not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to be headed by the Coordinator. The bill also establishes the Homelessness and Housing Solutions special fund and appropriates \$2,000,000 into and out of the special fund for the administration of the office.

The Coordinator recognizes a long-term coordinated effort by government and the private sector is necessary to reduce and homelessness statewide. Over the past six and a half years, the Coordinator has worked as Chair of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) to guide a series of policy changes that contributed to steady decreases in homelessness statewide between 2016 and 2020. The [annual legislative report](#)<sup>1</sup> summarizes the recent work of the Coordinator and HICH.

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<sup>1</sup> Report available at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/HICH-Report-to-2022-Legislature-FINAL.pdf>.

The Coordinator appreciates the amendment by the Senate Committees on Human Services and Government Operations to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions within DHS rather than the Department of Budget and Finance. The Coordinator also appreciates amendments to clarify that disbursements from the special fund to public and private agencies be in accordance with chapter 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), rather than chapter 42F, HRS.

Regarding the proposed special fund, section 3 includes a provision that “any funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall be in addition to and shall not supplant any portion of the budget for the ohana zones fund, housing first fund, rental housing revolving fund, and any other existing fund.” To clarify, there is no current Ohana Zones or Housing First fund. In addition, the executive budget does not include specific funding for Ohana Zones.

The Coordinator requests clarification regarding language in section 4 on page 9, lines 3-7. It is unclear what is intended by the requirement that “each county shall provide support for programs within their respective counties.” This provision may unintentionally prohibit appropriations out of the special fund for the administration of the office if county support is not provided.

The same language in Section 4 requires the Coordinator to “seek matching funds from the county in which any proposed capital improvements are built or created” as a condition for appropriations out of the special fund. It is unclear if the intent is for the proposed special fund to support capital improvement projects, such as construction of new housing or shelter facilities. If this is the intent, the Coordinator suggests the Legislature clarify this in section (c) starting from page 7, line 16 through page 8, line 10 that specifies the purposes that special fund monies shall be used for. To maximize general funds to homeless services, the Coordinator also requests the Legislature consider amending section 36-27(a), HRS, and section 36 -30(a), HRS, to exempt the proposed special fund from the respective central services expenses and the administrative expenses assessment.

As currently drafted, this bill does not appear to include a specific appropriation for personnel costs or establishment of positions for the proposed office. The Coordinator currently supervises four full-time staff. The Coordinator’s staff are funded in the executive



budget through a combination of general funds and federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. If this measure proceeds, the Legislature may consider establishing this same number of positions within the proposed office and including a specific appropriation for staffing and other operating expenses, such as office space, accounting, and human resources support.

Finally, the Coordinator respectfully requests for a delay of the effective date to allow time for planning and transition of current functions to the proposed office. Currently, the effective date for this bill is July 1, 2022. Notably, the current Coordinator's appointment will end in December 2022. A new Coordinator will require additional time for implementation, including coordination with DHS, identifying office space, and staff appointments. Planning and preparation for establishing the new office are critical to mitigate potential conflicts with state agencies and community partners, such as the Continua of Care (CoCs).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

**STATE OF HAWAI‘I**  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

**Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender, State  
of Hawai‘i to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

February 23, 2022

S.B. No. 2370 SD1: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports S.B. No. 2370 SD1.

The purpose of this measure is to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund.

An informal group brought together by the Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki and identified as the Ending Homelessness Group (“EHG”), representing twenty-plus representatives from eleven state, county, and non-profit agencies (including the Office of the Public Defender), has been meeting since June 2021 to discuss problems and difficulties in ending (or at least reducing) homelessness and in finding solutions to prevent and end homelessness. The EHG came up with many different proposals to meet gaps in housing, enforcement, and treatment/system flow. One such solution is to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions.

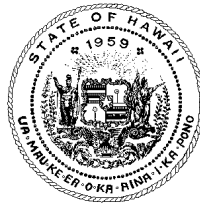
The EHG recognized that a long-term solution was necessary to reduce, prevent, and end homelessness. Currently, homelessness is addressed through year-to-year funding rather than funding in the base budget. This creates uncertainty among agencies and providers with sporadic and fragmented services instead of continuous attention to getting the homeless to permanent housing.

The creation of a central agency such as the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions will be able to coordinate matters relating to homelessness and affordable housing between state and county agencies and private entities with the goal of preventing and ending homelessness through transitional and permanent housing and supportive and/or assisted services. The proposed executive office will also be able to work with other executive branch departments and agencies to develop and maintain multi-year strategic and tactical plans and road maps that are part of the State’s overall plan for homelessness and housing. The office will also be able to develop and implement homelessness and housing strategies, including authority to

obtain exemptions for homeless shelters, mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities and supportive housing projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on S.B. No. 2370 SD1.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



**LATE**

**MAX N. OTANI**  
DIRECTOR

**Maria C. Cook**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Tommy Johnson**  
Deputy Director  
Corrections

**Jordan Lowe**  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**

1177 Alakea Street, 6<sup>TH</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2370, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

by

Max N. Otani, Director  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 23, 2022; 10:05 a.m.  
Via Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports the intent of Senate Bill (SB) 2370, Senate Draft (SD) 1, which establishes an Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and Homelessness Solutions Special Fund in the Department of Human Services (DHS) and appropriates funds for this purpose.

PSD had previously stated its support for SB 2370 and appreciates the Senate Committees on Human Services' and Government Operations' amendment in SD 1 to administratively attach the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and Homelessness Solutions Special Fund to DHS, rather than the Department of Budget and Finance.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



**LATE**

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
ON  
SENATE BILL NO. 2370, S.D. 1

**February 23, 2022**  
**10:05 a.m.**  
**Room 211 and Videoconference**

**RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

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

Senate Bill (S.B) No. 2370, S.D. 1, amends Chapter 346, HRS, to: 1) establish the Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (OHHS) within the Department of Human Services (DHS); 2) set the duties and responsibilities of OHHS; 3) designate the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH) as the head of OHHS; 4) set additional reporting requirements for the GCH; 5) authorize the GCH to appoint OHHS staff without regard to Chapter 76, HRS; 6) establish the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund (HHSSF); and 7) add new definitions for clarity. The bill also appropriates \$2,000,000 in general funds to be deposited into the HHSSF and appropriates \$2,000,000 out of the HHSSF in FY 23, with requirements that the general funds be non-supplanting and that the GCH seek matching county funds from any county which benefits from a capital improvement funded by the HHSSF, to DHS to cover administration costs of OHHS in FY 23.

B&F notes that, as a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any special fund which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.3, HRS.

Special funds should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining.

Regarding S.B. No. 2370, S.D. 1, there does not appear to be any significant source of revenues to support the HHSSF aside from appropriations from the general fund.

B&F also notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation 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.

# 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.*

## COMMENTS ON SB 2370 SD1 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means,  
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)  
Hearing: Wednesday, February 23rd, 2022, 10:05am  
Position: **Comments**

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means :

Partner In Care, Oahu's Continuum of Care, would like to submit **comments on SB 2370 SD 1 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Partners In Care supports the intent of this measure and would like to submit several comments:

The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness (GCH) has been a great partner throughout the state to bring together stakeholders around the crisis of homelessness. As the Administrator of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness, the GCH has brought state, local, non profits and community members together to strategize on projects and analyze all available data.

Currently, there are two Continuums of Care in Hawaii, Partners In Care, which covers the County of Honolulu, and Bridging the Gap which represents all other County regions. Each Continuum has a database that includes resources and information from all providers within their separate Continuums. Partners In Care encourages policy makers to review current data that is available through these entities prior to the creation of a new data center. While there may be a need to analyze data across the state, we feel that this requires more discussion. Each Continuum also hosts a Coordinated Entry System which assess' the needs of those experiencing homelessness and has a process to refer them to appropriate resources available through federal, state and local programs. Despite covid, the Continuums continue to house individuals and provide services to those in need.

We are supportive of resources for successful and necessary projects to be placed in the base budget rather than year to year funding requests. We are also in support of the continuation of the Ohana Zone project with the GCH as lead for these innovative and fast tracked projects. The staff and Coordinator in the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness Office have been integral in bringing people together and we encourage the continuation of these positions in a more permanent structure.

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

Aloha

**Bob Wardlaw, Advocacy Chair, PARTNERS IN CARE, OAHU'S CONTINUUM OF CARE**  
200 North Vineyard Boulevard • Suite 210 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96817 • (808) 380-9444 •  
[PICadvocate@gmail.com](mailto:PICadvocate@gmail.com)



## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2370, SD 1

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, & Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz  
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 23, 2022 (10:05 AM)

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Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** SB 2370, SD1, which establishes the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund.

HHRC underscores the finding language noting that “year-to-year funding among agencies and providers for homeless services threatens already potentially sporadic and fragmented services, instead of providing consistent support that will help permanently house persons experiencing homelessness.”

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's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii 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 testify on this measure.

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
From: Clara Kathman  
Subject: Support of Senate Bill 2370 relating to homelessness

Aloha! My name is Clara Kathman and I am currently a senior at Kalaheo High School. I strongly support SB2370 and ask you to vote yes on this bill.

This bill would ask the state to create a long-term commitment to reduce, prevent, and end homelessness. SB2370 asks that the state appropriates funds to create the Office on Homelessness and Housing solutions. This is extremely vital to Hawaii's wellbeing as it will establish a committee to help the, "6,458 people experiencing homelessness statewide" (2020 PIT count). By establishing an office dedicated to creating solutions to homelessness the state demonstrates its active investment in the homelessness crisis. Currently, Hawaii ranks third in the country for its high rate of homelessness. This is a crisis that needs active attention and proactive change. Establishing the Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions will give this issue the attention it so desperately needs.

Homelessness is an issue that no one in Hawaii can ignore. No matter where you go it is staring you in the face. Everyone I know has had positive and negative interactions with the houseless people in our community including myself. For the most part, these are kind and generous people just trying to get by, but they cannot do it without the State's help. It is no secret that housing prices are extremely high and navigating the affordable housing world is nothing short of complicated. With the establishment of the office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions, we can give houseless people the support they need to get off the street and into fulfilling community roles.

The state can no longer ignore this crisis. I strongly urge you to support the thousands of residents of Hawaii currently on the streets by voting YES on SB2370.

Sincerely,

Clara Kathman

Citations

"Point in Time Count." *Point in Time Count*, <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/point-in-time-count/>.

"State of Homelessness: 2021 Edition." *National Alliance to End Homelessness*, 16 Aug. 2021, <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2021/>.

**LATE**

**SB-2370-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/22/2022 10:01:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2022 10:05:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Sarah Yuan	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I'm writing to support SB2370 SD1 Related to Homelessness, which proposes establishing a permanent office on homelessness and housing solutions and making an appropriation.

I have been studying homelessness in Hawaii for over 15 years. I have seen the significant impacts the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) has made by coordinating public and private efforts to reduce homelessness. However, funding the HICH as a special project without permanent staff positions and a base budget has limited its effectiveness in planning and implementing longer-term comprehensive strategies that the state needs to end homelessness.

SB2370 SD1 proposed establishing the Office on homelessness and housing solutions within the DHS for administrative purposes and staffing the office with exempt positions. This set up would ensure that the new office will be able start operating in the shorest timeframe.

I urge you to vote in support of SB2370 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.