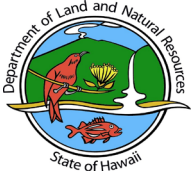


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committees on
HUMAN SERVICES
and
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**Tuesday, February 8, 2022
3:00 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference

**SENATE BILL 2370
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Senate Bill 2370 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 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.

The Department notes that it may be more efficient to locate the Office in the Department of Human Services (DHS), rather than the Department of Budget and Finance (B&F), since much of the funds directed at homelessness already go through DHS for procurement. Since there is overlap between DHS and homelessness, other efficiencies could be found if the Office is in DHS.

Finally, the Office may benefit from a transition period to allow time for planning and input from other agencies on how the new office will function and to ensure minimal negative impacts as a result of the changes proposed in this bill. The Department defers to B&F and DHS regarding the impact this bill may have on their functions and staffing.

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

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 Human Services
and the Senate Committee on Government Operations**

February 8, 2022

S.B. No. 2370: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Chairs San Buenaventura and Moriwaki, Vice Chairs Ihara and Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committees:

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

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.

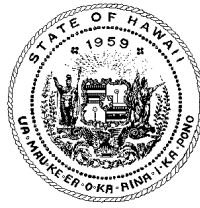
The EHG recognized that a long-term solution was necessary to reduce, prevent, and end homelessness. Currently, homelessness is addressed through year-to-year funding rather than funding in the base budget. This creates uncertainty among agencies and providers with sporadic and fragmented services instead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

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

MAX N. OTANI
DIRECTOR

Maria C. Cook
Deputy Director
Administration

Tommy Johnson
Deputy Director
Corrections

Jordan Lowe
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

No. _____

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2370
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

by

Max N. Otani, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Human Services
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Les Ihara, Jr., Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Government Operations
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 8, 2022; 3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 225 and Video Conference

Chairs San Buenaventura and Moriwaki, Vice Chairs Ihara and Dela Cruz, and
Members of the Committees:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) has reviewed Senate Bill (SB)
2370, which seeks to establish an Office of Homelessness and Housing
Solutions and Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund, and to
appropriate funds for this purpose.

PSD supports the intent of this measure and defers to the Department of
Human Services (DHS), respectfully suggesting the new Office of Homelessness
and Housing Solutions and its related Special Fund be more appropriately
established within DHS for administrative purposes, in consideration of the
current administrative locus of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness
and Hawaii Public Housing Authority in that department.

Thank you for the opportunity submit testimony on SB 2370.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ALII PLACE
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-7400 • FAX: (808) 768-7515

STEVEN S. ALM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

THOMAS J. BRADY
FIRST DEPUTY
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



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

**THE HONORABLE SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**Thirty-First State Legislature
Regular Session of 2022
State of Hawai'i**

February 8, 2022

LATE

RE: S.B. 2370; RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Ihara, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, members of the Senate Committee on Human Services, and members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu ("Department") submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 2370.

With 46 out of every 10,000 people in Hawai'i being reported as homeless--one of the highest rates in the nation--and 70% of our homeless individuals living in unsheltered locations, our State is clearly in a dire situation.¹ Indeed, homelessness not only presents a direct risk to the health and safety of affected individuals, it also serves as an added stressor and/or contributing factor in many crimes.

The purpose of S.B. 2370 is to create a central agency which will spearhead greater collaboration, coordination and the creation of effective initiatives to address homelessness. The Department strongly agrees that Hawaii would benefit from the creation of the office on homelessness and housing solutions, as its presence will be a positive step towards unifying and creating continuity among government agencies and community partners. The Department

¹ "2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), dated March 18, 2021. Available online at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2020-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>; last accessed January 25, 2022.

greatly appreciates the Legislature's support providing the necessary resources and funding to pursue this rewarding endeavor.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu supports the passage of S.B. 2370. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 8, 2022

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

The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair
Senate Committee on Government Operations

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

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

Hearing: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 3:00 p.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this bill, respectfully offers comments and defers to the Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) regarding the potential impact on their respective agencies and the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions special fund. The bill makes an appropriation of \$2,000,000 into and out of the homelessness and housing solutions fund for the administration of the office.

The Coordinator recognizes a long-term coordinated effort by the government and private sector is necessary to reduce and end 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. Key actions included implementation of performance metrics in DHS contracts for homeless services, implementation of the Medicaid

Community Integration Services (CIS) tenancy and pre-tenancy support program, the establishment of statewide protocols to address encampments on public lands, and implementation of the Ohana Zones pilot program in partnership with the four counties. In addition, the Coordinator's placement in DHS has enabled a positive working relationship with the DHS Homeless Programs Office (HPO), Med-QUEST Division (MQD), and Social Services Division (SSD) to support the efforts of the HICH. The [annual legislative report](#)¹ summarizes the recent work of the Coordinator and HICH.

As currently drafted, the bill takes effect July 1, 2022. The Coordinator notes additional time will be required to effectively plan and transition current functions from DHS to B&F effectively. For example, the Coordinator administers Ohana Zone contracts with the four counties through DHS; these have a variety of end dates, with the latest ending in June 2023. If the bill passes, it is unclear how the administration of these existing contracts will be impacted or how proposed Ohana Zones funding will be managed if new measures appropriate new funds to DHS. The Coordinator would like to minimize additional contract administration, especially if additional appropriations are available to procure more or existing services.

In addition, the establishment of the new office will likely require coordination with executive branch agencies and offices that have overlapping responsibilities, such as DHS HPO, DOH, Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA), and the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC). The current Coordinator's appointment will end in December 2022. A new Coordinator will require additional time for planning and implementation, including identifying office space and staff appointments.

Concerning the proposed special fund, the Coordinator notes that section 346-377, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), which established a similar Housing First special fund, was repealed by the Legislature in 2016. However, the Housing First special fund included language that enabled the counties to appropriate matching funds into the special fund. Respectfully, the Legislature may want to consider amending this bill to include similar matching fund language for the proposed special fund. In addition, to maximize general funds to homeless

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

services, the Coordinator 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 administrative expenses assessment.

The Coordinator further notes that page 8, line 3 of the bill allows the proposed special fund to “[p]rovide financial assistance to public and private agencies in accordance with chapter 42F involved in homelessness and housing solutions other than those covered by this section.” Chapter 42F, HRS, applies only to grants awarded by the Legislature by an appropriation to a specified recipient. The Coordinator suggests deleting the reference to chapter 42F and replacing it with reference to chapter 103F, HRS, regarding purchases of health and human services.

Finally, the Coordinator requests clarification at page 2, line 20, that the Coordinator currently supervises four full-time staff.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator will work with B&F, DHS, and other impacted executive branch agencies to assess impacts and develop a transition plan to implement the proposed office. 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.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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

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

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

**TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON HUMAN SERVICES AND GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2370**

**February 8, 2022
3:00 p.m.
Room 225 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

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

Senate Bill (S.B) No. 2370 amends Chapter 346, HRS, to: 1) establish the Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (OHHS) within B&F; 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 to B&F to cover administration costs of OHHS in FY 23.

B&F notes that it currently does not administer any programs that develop, coordinate, and implement homelessness and housing solutions and that the establishment of OHHS may be more suitable within a department that already has programs that perform similar and related activities.

B&F also notes that, as a matter of general policy, the department 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, there does not appear to be any significant source of revenues to support the HHSSF aside from appropriations from the general fund.

B&F further 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.

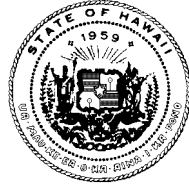
Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- 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.

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 6, 2022

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

The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Chair
Senate Committee on Government Operations

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

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

February 1, 2022, 1:00 pm
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of this measure, defers to the Department of Budget & Finance (B&F), and provides comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to establish the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund. Makes an appropriation.

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 and exempt from Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes. However, DHS does not necessarily agree that transferring the Coordinator and staff to B&F will result in the office having more authority than it currently does. The Legislature could authorize the

Coordinator additional authority in the current structure. DHS is concerned that a transfer will require a considerable amount of time and resources and may not result in significant progress to address homelessness.

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 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. Year-to-year funding does not encourage long-term strategies or investment by community providers in program development or allow for program enhancements. Most importantly, the State and Counties must invest in increasing the low-income rental inventory so residents can live in real homes and not have to survive in shelters.

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

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 11:37:11 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
John & Rita Shockley	Testifying for FREE ACCESS COALITION	Support	No

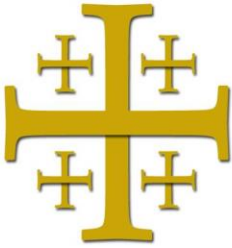
Comments:

Aloha!

As coordinators for the Free Access Coalition, a loose confederation of non-profit organizations and activists for access to all public areas and services, we need to address organizing a unified group to be the end-all responsible agency for homeless issues.

We support the effort.

Mahalo for your time.



ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL CHURCH

75-5769 Ali'i Drive • Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740
PH: (808) 326-7771 • Email: stmichaelarchangel@rcchawaii.org
Website: stmichaelparishkona.org

February 6, 2022

Committees Chairs and members:

RE: SB2370, establishes the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund – **Strongly Support**

St. Michael the Archangel Church is located in Kailua-Kona on Alii Drive in the center of town across the street from the ocean. We support the needs of our homeless and vulnerable brothers and sisters who we see every day with a food pantry, sharing garden, meals, diapers, furnishings for the newly housed, and advocacy. We work with community coalitions that strive to end homelessness including Community Alliance Partners, and the West Hawaii Faith Based Hui to End Family Homelessness.

In that work we have the very strong leadership and support of Scott Morishige and his staff at the Governor's Office on Homelessness. Addressing all the issues that lead up to homelessness including the lack of affordable housing is long term. Thus, we need an Office of Homeless and Housing Solutions that is long term.

Please vote yes on SB2370.

Humbly,

Shirley David

Shirley David, Pastoral Council Chair
St. Michael the Archangel Parish

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 12:01:44 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

Kimeona Kane from Waimānalo in support of this action. Homelessness is an increasingly complex issue and needs as much resources as possible to simply begin to address the issues surrounding the many problems. Please help the public with this difficult issue by supporting the creation of the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness and Housing Solutions Special Fund.

Mahalo nui,
kimeona kane

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/3/2022 1:25:14 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Casey Takayama	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Need fresh and innovative ideas to drastically improve the situation of homelessness in Hawaii.

**SB2370: Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions; Homelessness and Housing
Solutions Special Fund; Appropriation (\$)**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Ihara, Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the committees.

My name is Hope Coyaso, a constituent hailing from Kaua'i, writing *in support* of **SB2370**. I find the creation of an office for homeless and a consistent budget to be measures long overdue in this state. Homelessness is a chronic issue, impacting an estimated number of 15,000 people in Hawai'i, and is deeply intertwined with nearly every social problem our state currently faces.

Working in social services, particularly with youth and families, I have seen firsthand the impacts of homelessness. I will never forget these cases in which families are seemingly on a path to success when they become homeless with the children then ending up in foster care or in residential psychiatric care; their lives completely changed. Mental health, physical health, education, and general wellbeing are completely degraded when a person becomes homeless as without the most basic need of shelter being met, there is little to no capacity to address any other area of life. So many families in Hawai'i are unable to get on their feet simply because they cannot get a roof over their head.

Once a person begins to experience homelessness, every aspect of their life becomes an uphill battle. Our current system does not make it any easier. Services for those experiencing homelessness are not coordinated and agencies have limited resources thereby restricting access. Experiencing homelessness is difficult enough; our brothers and sisters experiencing homelessness need and deserve well-coordinated, consistent, and accessible care.

Our neighbors experiencing homelessness need systematic and encompassing help, not to be simply being pushed out of the streets and out of public eye as has been the strategy for far too long. May the committee members remember in the making of this decision that your constituents are not limited to only those with homes, but also includes those struggling, without resources, and without a voice to get their needs met. Thank you for your time and reception of this testimony.

Mahalo,
Hope Coyaso

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/5/2022 2:18:18 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2370, which will assist in creating a comprehensive and more coordinated funding approach to addressing our homelessness crisis.

While I write as an individual, I have served as President and director of Institute for Human Services, President of the Hawaii State Bar Association, and as a member of the Church of the Crossroads Peace and Justice Mission Team, spending many years helping Hawaii find better systemic ways to address its dual crises of homelessness and lack of affordable housing. We are in dire need of greater coordination of our fractured efforts on serving our homeless neighbors.

Over 100 of our homeless residents are dying on our streets each year, at an average age of only 54. [Deaths of homeless people continue to climb on Oahu | Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#) In other words, they lose 25-30 years of their expected lifespan due to the very real dangers of living on the street. This bill is essential to help fill the many gaps in services and treatment, and to help our state streamline funds and services in a way that can be most effective. Abandoning these individuals to their “freedom” to live on the streets, often while severely disabled, is a death sentence for many of them. They are someone’s son or daughter, parent or loved one, and they deserve the same caring and curative treatment as would be offered to persons with other life-threatening medical conditions. We as a community can do better than what we are doing, and this bill is a step in the right direction.

Thank you for your consideration of this measure.

Ellen Godbey Carson

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 12:22:24 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Elizabeth Nelson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

We have many agencies that deal with our house less situation and they do remarkable work. But it seems that they lack coordination. This bill could provide that.

It is past time that our state come up with workable solutions instead of leaving people out on the street without shelter, sanitation, or support. They are human beings, no matter their situations.

Please support this bill. Thank you.

Elizabeth Nelson, Kaneohe

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 9:18:13 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Colleen Rost-Banik	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Colleen Rost-Banik. I'm a resident of Honolulu and a lecturer within the University of Hawaii system. I urge you to support SB2370, which would establish an office on homelessness and housing solutions. We need to create much better, caring responses for our neighbors experiencing houselessness, including Housing First programs. This office could help to ensure that coordinated and caring responses to houselessness take place. Please support this bill to create this much needed office with more permanent staffing and funding.

Respectfully,
Colleen Rost-Banik

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 11:16:22 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Galen Fox	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

In support of SB2370. When several are responsible, nobody is. Historians believe accidental president Harry Truman did well. One reason: he lived the sign on his desk, "The Buck Stops Here." He took charge.

SB2370 deals with our maddening, unsolved homeless problem — encampments on our beaches, in our parks, on our sidewalks. The bill puts one person in charge and provides this boss with money and staff. About time.

SB-2370

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 2:35:01 PM

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

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

Comments:

I'm writing to support SB2370 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.

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



ALOHAHAWAIIIONIPAA ORG

Web: alohahawaiiionipaa.org

A tax-exempt public benefit charity under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue code whose major aims are to keep the Hawaiian spirit, heritage and culture alive and flourishing, to protect Hawaii's natural resources, and to assist with affordable housing solutions.

41-1135 Waikupanaha Street, Waimanalo, HI 96795
(808) 200-3414

February 7, 2022

We support SB2370 that proposes to establish the *State Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions* because, as it states so clearly, the legislature found that the State lacks a long-term commitment to reduce, prevent, and end homelessness. At the same time, we must acknowledge that the lack of truly affordable housing because of the State's reluctance to get directly involved in finding meaningful solutions is part of the homeless crisis.

The proposal is well-researched and well-written and covers the many concerns that we all have, attempting to mitigate the homeless crisis. As part of its Annual report, it also includes a key aspect, namely that state agencies that administer public lands also provide an inventory of available vacant land.

Our only concern is the cost of "\$2,000,000 or so much thereof" for just fiscal year 2022—2023 for the administration of the Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions. This seems to be excessive and more transparency is needed here.

John Thomas
Treasurer AHOP org

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