



HAWAI‘I CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION

KOMIKINA PONO KĪWILA O HAWAI‘I

830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 411 HONOLULU, HI 96813 • PHONE: 586-8636 • FAX: 586-8655 • TDD: 568-8692

Friday, February 24, 2023
Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

To: The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Liann Ebesugawa, Chair
and Commissioners of the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission

Re: S.B. No. 327, S.D. 1

The Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission (HCRC) has enforcement jurisdiction over Hawai‘i’s laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, and access to state and state funded services. The HCRC carries out the Hawai‘i constitutional mandate that no person shall be discriminated against in the exercise of their civil rights. Art. I, Sec. 5.

The HCRC supports S.B. No. 327, S.D. 1. This bill would amend HRS § 46-1.5 to authorize the counties to enact their own ordinances to prohibit housing discrimination against persons based on their source of income.

While source of income is different in kind from the protected bases under fair housing law, there is some correlation between the protected bases under federal and state fair housing law and those who receive rental assistance and other sources of income from government programs – many are people living with disabilities, families with children, single female heads of household, and members of racial minority groups.

In 2022, the legislature passed S.B. No. 206, enacted as Act 310, which effective May 1, 2023, adds a new HRS chapter to prohibit housing discrimination based on source of income, including participation in a housing assistance program.

The HCRC supported S.B. 206/Act 310, but pointed out that the new law limits its efficacy as a statutory remedy by exempting landlords who own not more than four dwelling units in the state; the new chapter also omits attorney’s fees as a remedy, which will limit access to the courts to seek legal remedy for violations.

S.B. No. 327 would authorize the counties to enact their own ordinances to prohibit discrimination against renters based on source of income, which could include stronger protections than will be provided by the new state law.

The HCRC supports S.B. No. 327, S.D. 1.

ADDRESSED TO KARL RHOADS & STANLEY CHANG

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING & SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

HOUSE BILL NO. SB327 SD1

RELATING TO HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2023

9:00 AM CONFERENCE ROOM 016 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

My name is Marni Greenberg, and I am a resident of Hawai'i. I am testifying on measure SB327 SD1, relating to housing discrimination. I am strongly in support of this bill being passed, because I see all of the components of this bill as necessary actions for maintaining the public safety, wellbeing, and structure of Hawai'i's counties. It is mentioned that each county shall have the power to provide and regulate the usage of lighting and marking for buildings that may be aerial hazards. This measure also touches on that each country should have the power to maintain and regulate channels that carry storm runoff, as well as perform the removal of any debris that could cause pollution or public nuisance. I am very much in favor of each county having this power, given that these areas are very important for the safety of Hawai'i's communities, as well as the wellbeing of the natural ecosystems.

Another prominent section of this measure mentions that each county shall have the power to regulate and enforce actions such as building inspections, policing, the collection and dispersion of garbage, and the cumulation of violation fines from individuals who do not adhere to county ordinance. In my eyes, all of these actions are vital for keeping communities afloat, and maintaining a necessary level of order and harmony. Without these laws and enforcements set out by each country, there would be chaos. Also, it is absolutely necessary to implement violation fines for those who do not abide by county guidelines, because this gives people additional incentive to participate in maintaining order and peace in Hawai'i's communities.

My favorite part of this measure mentioned that the county can provide exemptions for the homeless, homeless facilities, and homeless programs. I often feel concerned for people who are living without homes, and knowing that people in this situation are often ordered to evacuate the area that they have been living in is very sad to me. The idea of county mayors and executives providing exemptions for people who are in this situation, and for the facilities and programs that are helping this part of the population, is very uplifting to me.

I would like to thank all the reviewers of this testimony for taking the time to read my opinion and reasoning. To recapitulate, I am highly in support of all motions involved in this measure, as I find that all aspects of this proposal aim to provide utmost wellbeing and public safety of Hawai'i's communities.

Marni Greenberg

P.O Box 2113, Pahoia, HI., 96778

SB-327-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 10:27:31 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB327 SD1.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2504, SD 2

TO: Chair Nakamura, Vice Chair Hashimoto, & Housing Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: March 17, 2022 (9:00 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** SB 2504, SD 2, which provides incentives for landlords who participate in government rental assistance programs, including the federal housing choice voucher program (Section 8). We hope that this bill can be amended to prohibit discrimination in real estate transactions and requirements based on source of income.

This measure recognizes that many low-income persons and families who obtain needed assistance have great difficulty in finding and securing rentals in a perennially high-cost, low-supply housing landscape. This includes people living with HIV who receive federal housing assistance and are provided medical case management services by HHRC staff. Our staff engaged in homelessness prevention and housing-focused case management have struggled to find safe, stable, and affordable housing even when a program participant obtains housing assistance in the form of a voucher.

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 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 testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 24, 2023

The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Rhoads and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB327 SD1 RELATING TO HOUSING DISCRIMINATION.

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS SB327 SD1**, which allows counties to prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income. (SD1)

Our Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) community relies on the Housing Choice (Section 8) Voucher program. These vouchers can ensure those with I/DD can live safely and independently. However, websites used to find apartments in Hawaii, such as Craigslist, have an overwhelming number of listings marked "No Section 8 Allowed". This discrimination means that those using Section 8 vouchers, typically people already most at-risk of becoming houseless, cannot find housing even with federal aid. Removing these barriers could help Housing Choice (Section 8) Voucher users to find safe and decent housing.

People wait months to receive their section 8 vouchers and cannot use them due to discrimination based on their section 8 support. Our state is at risk of losing federal dollars if our section 8 voucher program does not increase the number of vouchers used.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB327 SD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

February 24, 2023

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary

State Capitol, Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

RE: Senate Bill 327, SD1, Relating to Housing Discrimination

HEARING: Friday, February 24, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawai'i and its over 11,000 members. HAR provides **comments** on Senate Bill 327, SD1, which allows counties to prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income.

While we appreciate the intent of this measure, we believe it is not necessary. Last year the Legislature passed Senate Bill 206, CD1 (Act 310) which prohibits discrimination, including in advertisements for rental property, in rental transactions based on participation in a Section 8 housing choice program or any permanent supportive housing program or requirements related to participation in these housing assistance programs. This law takes effect on May 1, 2023.

Additionally, last year the Legislature passed House Bill 1752, CD1 (Act 287) which establishes the Housing Choice Voucher Landlord Incentive Program. Incentives include signing bonuses up to one month's rent and a housing provider may be reimbursed up to one month's rent when the dwelling unit sits vacant or when the housing provider initially transitions the dwelling unit to a rental under the Section 8 program. Additionally, this measure helps reduce inspection time by hiring more housing quality inspectors and requiring the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) to adopt or amend rules to establish a maximum of 15 days after receipt of a housing provider's inspection request to do the inspection.

HAR believes that government subsidized housing assistance programs, such as Section 8, are an important part of our community's social safety net. Act 287 is a great step in helping to reduce the barriers that make the process challenging for housing providers, and efforts such as these should be encouraged instead, so that tenants can find a place to call home more quickly.

Therefore, we believe that **this measure is premature as Act 310 has not taken effect yet to see it's intended impacts. Moreover, HPHA has until July 1, 2023, to adopt or amend its Administrative Rules pursuant to Act 287.**

Thank you for your consideration of our comments on this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



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: Senate Committee on Judiciary
Re: **SB 327, SD1 - Relating to Housing Discrimination**
Hawai'i State Capitol and via Videoconference
February 24, 2023, 9:30 AM

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in SUPPORT of SB 327, SD1, relating to housing discrimination. This bill allows counties to prohibit discrimination against renters based on their source of income.

HCAN Speaks! Board
of Directors

Liza Ryan Gill
President

Nick Kacprowski, J.D.
Treasurer

Mandy Fernandes
Secretary

Teri Keliipuleole
Jasmine Slovak
Erica Yamauchi

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 2022 was \$31.15 per hour. Meanwhile, the median wage for in the state didn't come close, at \$24.26 per hour.¹

That's why housing vouchers, and other sources of income that help renters afford their homes, are arguably more important in Hawai'i than in any other state. Housing vouchers help low-income renters – especially families with children – afford housing by providing vouchers that they can spend on rent. But many landlords discriminate against housing voucher holders by refusing to rent to them.

It is also well established that housing instability has harmful effects on children's health and educational outcomes.² In other words, source of income discrimination against renters is not only a contributing factor to Hawai'i's homelessness and housing affordability crises, but also has far-reaching negative effects on our keiki.

For the reasons above, HCAN Speaks! believes that the state should allow the counties to join the growing number of jurisdictions across the country that have prohibited discrimination against renters based on their source of income.³

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.cbpp.org/research/housing/prohibiting-discrimination-against-renters-using-housing-vouchers-improves-results>

February 23, 2023

COMMITTEE on HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Honorable Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair

Re: SB610, Relating to American Sign Language

Dear Chairperson San Buenaventura, and Members,

My name is Kay Naquin. I have been a teacher of Deaf and hard of hearing students over thirty years and sign fluently. I am writing in support of SB610 Relating to American Sign Language because I have seen the study of American Sign Language improve the language acquisition of students. .

I started learning American Sign Language in the 1970's when it was first identified as a full language. Fully understanding the language as a visual language and not some sort of code has lead to the improvement of language acquisition. I have seen improvements in teaching the language so that people who were taught American Sign Language in the 2000's use it more accurately and clearly than every before.

The recognition of American Sign Language as a fully functional and dynamic language has also enriched our understanding of language acquisition worldwide. American sign language has its own phonology and syntax. I can understand a French Sign Language speaker more easily than a British Sign Language speaker because French Sign Language and American Sign Language are related. I cannot understand British Sign Language because it is unrelated. My comprehension is based on the sign languages—not my knowledge of English or French.

It is a beautiful language with a unique history.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kay Naquin
98-615 Kilinoe St, #6B2
Aiea, Hawaii 96701