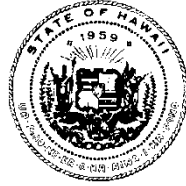


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO:

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

9:30 a.m., February 22, 2023
Hawaii State Capitol
Room 211

In consideration of
SB 898, SD1
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 898, SD1, relating to kupuna housing.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) **supports** the enactment of SB 898, SD1, which would temporarily expand the State Rent Supplement Program to target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years or older and at imminent risk of homelessness.

The HPHA's mission is to provide Hawaii's residents with adequate and affordable housing, economic opportunity, and suitable living environments that are free from discrimination through both its public housing and rental assistance programs. The HPHA serves our state's most disadvantaged populations, including families earning less than thirty percent of the Area Median Income, the disabled, and the elderly.

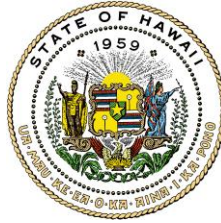
The HPHA would truly appreciate the opportunity to expand the capacity of the Rent Supplement Program to serve more of our community's at-risk kupuna. Our agency has the expertise to develop and manage the expansion of this program as well as a proven track record of successful collaborations with the non-profit community.

Please know that an appropriation of approximately \$1,000,000 and 1.0 FTE for a Public Housing Specialist II position will be needed for approximately 250 households.

Our agency stands ready to assist the Legislature in this endeavor and believes this measure is a significant step forward to solving our State's affordable housing crisis. The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Committee with its testimony regarding SB 898, SD1. We thank you for your dedicated and continued support.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

LATE

Testimony in SUPPORT of SB898 SD1
Relating to Kupuna Housing

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR DONOVAN DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing Date: February 22, 2023
9:30 AM

Room Number: 211
via Videoconference

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, supports SB898 SD1, Relating to Kupuna Housing.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates an unspecified amount of funds from the
4 general revenues of the State for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the same amount as may be
5 necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority for a state rent
6 supplement program for kūpuna, including an unspecified number of public housing specialist
7 positions within the Hawaii Public Housing Authority to support the program.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to temporarily expand the state rent
9 supplement program to specifically target qualified kupuna, who are sixty-two years of age or
10 older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, and appropriate funds for this
11 purpose. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data the poverty rate amongst Americans
12 age sixty-five and older has increased from 8.9% in 2020 to 10.3% in 2021. As housing costs
13 and inflation rise, kupuna, who rely on retirement income from Social Security and/or are on

1 fixed incomes, are struggling to pay for basic necessities. As a result, kupuna are forced to cut
2 back on essential expenses, such as food, transportation, and medication just to stretch their finite
3 funds. Any setback in their income can affect their ability to pay their mortgage or rent and put
4 them at risk of becoming homeless. Creative, long-term, affordable housing strategies are
5 needed to prevent kupuna, who are financially struggling, from becoming homeless.

6 **Recommendation:** The EOA supports the intent of this measure and defers to the Hawaii Public
7 Housing Authority to provide state rent supplement assistance and services to Hawaii's
8 vulnerable kupuna.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



LATE

DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

February 22, 2023

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senate Bill 898 SD1 – Relating to Kupuna Housing

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 898 SD1 – Relating to Kupuna Housing. This bill would temporarily expand the State Rent Supplement Program to specifically target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

The housing crisis is magnified for people with disabilities, including kupuna with disabilities. People with disabilities are twice as likely to be below the poverty level. Without action to address housing insecurity, more kupuna with disabilities are at risk of losing their independence or becoming homeless or institutionalized. This bill would assist kupuna with disabilities who are struggling to pay their rent.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830
1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882
aarp.org/hi | aarphi@aarp.org | twitter.com/AARPHawaii
facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 22, 2023
Conference Room 211, 9:30 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
RE: Support for S.B. 898, SD1 Relating to Kupuna Housing

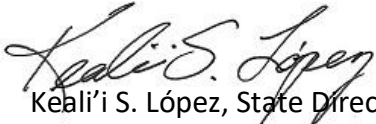
Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP supports S.B. 898 SD1 which temporarily expands the state rent supplement program to specifically target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Hawaii's high cost of housing is making it unaffordable for many, but especially for those at low or fixed income. These residents are more vulnerable of becoming dependent on other family members for shelter, or face homelessness. The Habitat for Humanity's 2021 State of Home Affordability in Hawaii reports that 1 in 5 households spend half or more of their income on housing. According to the same report, in total, 53% of renters and 30% of homeowners are cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on housing. According to AARP/Statista analysis of close to 1000 older adults (age 55+) are expected to be evicted in 2023 and more than 1500 older (55+) are expected to experience homelessness in 2023 in Hawaii. It is essential to assist older adults from facing housing crisis and therefore, the proposed S.B. 898 SD1 will help many vulnerable kūpuna from being displaced from their residence. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support **S.B. 898, SD1**.

Sincerely,


Keali'i S. López, State Director



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 898 SD1: RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/22/23; 9:30 AM; Room 211 & via videoconference**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in Strong Support** of **SB 898 SD1**, which would temporarily expand the State Rent Supplement Program to target kupuna, sixty-two years of age or older who are homeless, or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are also a member of Partners In Care (PIC).

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing and homelessness.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i is gravely concerned about increasing homelessness among the kupuna in our community, mainly due to increasing rents. Many longtime elderly renters are coming to CCH for help since they cannot afford rising rents. Our Housing Assistance Program's waitlist for elders who are homeless or at imminent risk has almost doubled since last year. Many are over 75 years of age. Our biggest challenge is the lack of rentals that our clients can afford on their low incomes. Kupuna are forced to live in cars or on the streets when leases end or rents are raised.

Our kupuna have worked all their lives yet face homelessness when they are unable to work and must live on their low incomes. One sad example of kupuna at risk is an 81 year old woman with limited English. She had become homeless (living at a bus station) after she fell ill and could no longer work (at 81!). Although alert and able to use public transportation, all we could do immediately was to help her get on a waitlist for an emergency shelter which was full. She kept repeating, "I have never had to ask for help before." These sad stories go on and on.

This \$500 rent supplement would be a godsend to keep elders in stable housing before they face homelessness. We support funding for public housing specialist positions at the Hawaii Public Housing Authority in order to help these kupuna as fast as possible. The economic stress of homelessness and the anxiety of facing no place to go when a lease ends or rent is increased, can have a huge impact on their health.

Please help. Please provide our kupuna with the assistance to pay their ongoing rent. Contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 373-0356 or alohabettylou@hotmail.com if you have any questions.



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

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

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB898 SD1, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)

Hearing: Tuesday, February 22nd, 9:30 am, Conference Room 211/videoconference

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB898 SD1 RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING.**

Partners In Care (PIC), a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers and concerned organizations, works on Oahu to end homelessness.

Kupuna has a deep and honored position in our Hawaii community. Our Kupuna should be honored and respected and should be seen as living treasures, but that is not the case for so many of our senior community members. Due to the high cost of living in Hawaii, we are pricing our Kupuna out of housing and much of their support system is moving away from the islands.

Partners In Care has assisted many seniors with housing assistance and this is one of the most difficult populations to find housing for due to their fixed income and complex health needs. This measure proposes to expand the State Rent Supplement Program to those who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Hawaii has a large aging population and we need to recognize this and support our Kupuna. Our Kupuna deserve better, our elders deserve affordable housing so that they can be a resource and a teacher for our generation and beyond.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in SUPPORT OF SENATE 898 SD1.
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Thielen
Executive Director
Partners In Care

SB-898-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2023 6:28:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rose Marie Vergara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Date: February. 17, 2023

To: Committee on Ways and Means, Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, and Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

The hearing for SB898 SD1 is scheduled for February 22, 2023, 9:30 am, Conference Room 211

My name is Rose Marie Vergara, and my written testimony is in SUPPORT of SB898 SD1, Relating to kupuna housing.

According to the United States Census Bureau, in the state of Hawaii, the percentage of the population who are 65 years and older was 19.0% in 2019 and rose to 19.6% in 2021. The percentage of the population 65 years and older who live alone in a household was 32.6% in 2019 and rose to 33.9% in 2021. The percentage of the population 65 years and older for whom poverty status is determined whose income falls below the poverty level was 8.7% in 2019 and rose to 9.1% in 2020.

Those who are retired are on a fixed income, and, per the Census Bureau, in Hawaii, only 61.6% of those 65 years and older receive a retirement income. Costs such as rent, home care, property tax, transportation, and food continue to rise. Those on a fixed income have a more difficult time paying for what they need and end up cutting back on essentials, such as food and medication, to pay for their basic needs.

Providing rental assistance for those 65 years and older who are at risk for homelessness will allow them to have stable housing, which will increase their ability to afford nutritious food and pay for their medications, which ultimately will reduce their need to access emergency medical services. According to the World Health Organization, common conditions in older age include hearing loss, cataracts, osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, and depression. As people live longer but who may be declining in health (both physical and mental), not only are the outcomes of these older people more negative, society is also negatively impacted. By 2030, one in six people in the world will be 60 years old or older. If people at this age and older can be in good health and live in a supportive environment, they will not only have a better life, but they can be active participants in their communities.

The opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB898 SD1 is appreciated.

Kevin L. Johnson, Ko Olina, Hawai'i

**The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 22, 2023, Conference Room 211, 9:30 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
RE: Support for S. B. 898, SD1 Relating to Kupuna Housing

Thank-you for the opportunity to testify in **Support of S. B. 898, SD1** relating to Kupuna Housing.

We all understand the need for a continued, comprehensive approach to addressing the homeless situation on our islands. As the price of housing stock continues to rise, likewise does rent. While many working folks find it difficult to afford housing, imagine the impossible situation found by those unable to work, specifically our older population.

Senior citizens represent some of the least able to independently meet the challenges low income presents. These are folks whose income (if any) does not keep up with inflation and certainly not with the housing market. They find themselves at higher risks for homelessness or eviction. Due to the unavoidable nature of aging, they are also more likely to end up in hospitals, under indigent care, if not allowed to age safely and securely at home, with dignity.

Your **Support of S. B. 898, SD1** will demonstrate your understanding of this plight and your desire for a compassionate solution.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Johnson

SB-898-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2023 9:32:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Houselessness is one of the most pressing problems in Hawai‘i, which requires a robust, comprehensive, long-term solution to address the state’s affordable housing and houselessness crisis. One important component of the solution is ensuring that low-income kupuna are not forced into houselessness through a combination of fixed incomes and rapidly rising rents.

The 2017 Homeless Service Utilization Report found that there are 1,386 houseless elders in the state. Many more elders face houselessness as rents continue to rise. Due to the fixed incomes of elders, a state rent supplement program targeted toward kupuna that expands on the existing state rent supplement program administered by the Hawai‘i public housing authority is needed. Please pass SB898 SD1.

SB898 – The State Rental Supplement Program for Kupuna

Title: Kupuna Caucus; Our Care, Our Choice Act; Advanced Practice Registered Nurses; Mandatory Waiting Period

Description: Authorizes advanced practice registered nurses to practice medical aid in dying or provide counseling to a qualified patient. Amends the mandatory waiting period between oral requests and the provision of a prescription.

I humbly ask for your support on this Bill SB898. This bill temporarily expands the state rent supplement program to specifically target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. This legislation is so important for our very fragile kupuna who are being squeezed out of permanent housing every day. Our Kupuna deserve a roof over their heads and basic necessities to live out their lives with dignity. We have an alarming number of sick and houseless Kupuna on the Island of Kauai. This bill would help them to stay in their homes and off the streets. This bill will also require that HPHA file the annual reports.

SB-898-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 7:48:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hunter Heavilin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB898, a bill that seeks to address the issue of homelessness among our elderly population by temporarily expanding the State Rent Supplement Program. The legislation is a crucial step towards providing safe and affordable housing for individuals aged sixty-two or older who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

The proposed legislation is fiscally responsible and helps to prevent costly emergency services that often result when elderly citizens are left without stable housing. By requiring the Hawaii Public Housing Authority to submit annual reports to the Legislature, the program will be held accountable and ensure that it is effective. I urge lawmakers to pass SB898 to provide our kupuna population with the support and care they deserve.

TO: THE HONORABLE DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
THE HONORABLE GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SENATE BILL 898 RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Wednesday, 2/22/23

9:30 AM; Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee. My name is Nadia Onishi-Miyake. I am an undergraduate social work student enrolled at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. However, these opinions are my own and do not represent the university. I am also a former health care worker at a long-term care facility here in Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB 898, which would temporarily expand the State Rent Supplement Program to specifically target qualified kupuna who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

My previous years working with our kupuna in long-term care and my current education in social work have resulted in a personal passion for ensuring that our kupuna are advocated for at all levels. I have witnessed our kupuna face fear and stress when approaching discharge from a long-term care facility without a home available to move into. Oftentimes, this occurs because they do not have the financial means to pay the rent for available homes, or can not find homes within their budget. Some kupuna do not have the option of moving in with family members, as they are already living in multigenerational homes or with other roommates in order to afford their rent. SB 898 would provide the necessary assistance to kupuna like those I worked with as well as other kupuna who are at risk for, or currently facing, homelessness.

It is also part of the culture here in Hawai'i to care for our kupuna, who have spent their lives giving back to the communities and younger generations of Hawai'i. I stand in strong support of SB 898, as I believe it will provide our kupuna with the care and advocacy they deserve from the state of Hawai'i and its communities, through greater security in housing.

Thank you,

Nadia Onishi-Miyake

(808)-500-4094

SB-898-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 10:40:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass SB898. It appears that the number of homeless elderly has increased; unfortunately, that number is not captured in the annual homeless count. Not having a place to sleep, use the bathroom, etc. is horrific; couple that with being old and perhaps infirm is unimaginable.

Please pass SB898.

Mahalo!

Barbara J. Service MSW (ret.)

Child Welfare Supervisor

Kupuna Advocate

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

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Support for S.B. No. 898, S.D. 1, Relating to Kupuna Housing

I am testifying in support of S.B. No. 898, S.D. 1, Relating to Kupuna Housing. It is unfortunate that many kupuna have to face houselessness due to the rising costs of living here in Hawaii. No kupuna should have to worry about being kicked out of their homes when they are no longer able to work.

According to the State of Hawaii Research and Economic Analysis Division, there were an estimated 22,000 kupuna living in poverty in 2020. When broken down into subgroups, the highest percentage of kupuna living in poverty were those who lived in a rented home alone (28.4%). For those without family support and relying on a single fixed income, they can be one missed payment away from poverty and houselessness. These kupuna are most at-risk and vulnerable.

Through my education, I've seen kupuna who were financially stable for most of their life then were on the brink of losing their homes due to a medical emergency or a rapid decline in health. I've also seen multiple kupuna forced onto the streets because they're unable to find stable housing where they feel safe and respected. I hope that S.B. 898, S.D. 1 can help kupuna across all the islands retain their homes.

With the growing kupuna population, this situation will only be exacerbated if we're not working effectively. I hope that no one's grandparent has to face these hardships and that we stop seeing grandmas and grandpas on the streets. As a community, we should work to protect these at-risk kupuna who deserve to have a place to call home.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Taylor Hiraki

SB-898-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 8:26:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hiroshi Matsuoka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

From: Hiroshi D. Matuoka

To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, Committee on Ways and Means

Date: 21 February 2023

Subj: **Strong support for SB 898**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and the Committee,

My full voter reg name is Hiroshi Douglas Matsuoka and I'm a 70 year-old renter. I work full-time as the IT Director of Hawaii Meals on Wheels, I volunteer at Food Not Bombs which provides food for the hungry at Thomas Square on Sundays, and I'm also a director of Kokua Council, Hawaii's advocacy group for seniors. This testimony is from myself personally.

I am currently working full-time, and I have also been collecting early Social Security for the past several years. In early 2014 I was homeless simply for lack of funds. I used the available "safety net" services of food stamps and Medicaid (I had a cardiac stent put in in 2010) to see me through the year until I had a stable place to live and enough work hours and early Social Security to afford a stable place under roof.

At moment, I'm doing fine, and I'm helping support other adults in my household. One of the other adults is also a senior, and also working full-time. If I were not able to work for even a short time, I would be out on the street again.

I mention the foregoing to explain my support for SB898. My experience at Food Not Bombs at Thomas Square over the last 11 years is that there are a growing number of seniors out on the street or inadequately housed. The provisions of SB898 would at least extend some cover for the growing problem of senior homelessness.

I urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

H. Doug Matsuoka
Alewa, Oahu

SB-898-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 8:49:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

**Senate Ways and Means Committee
Chair: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz
Vice Chair: Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran
Hearing Date: February 22, 2023, 9:30am**

Re: SB898 SD1 - RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members. My name is Linda Dorset, a senior resident of Wailuku, Maui. I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding the above referenced legislation. I strongly support SB899 that will temporarily expand the state rent supplement program to specifically target qualified kupuna who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless and appropriate funds for this purpose.

Hawaii is facing an acute housing crisis with limited affordable options for many. Kupuna and others with limited resources are at higher risk for homelessness or eviction; and I can see a future where I might be one of those kupuna. The state urgently needs to seek solutions to address housing crisis so that individuals can age safely and securely in their homes with dignity.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority has testified that it would truly appreciate the opportunity to expand the capacity of the Rent Supplement Program to serve more of our community's at-risk kupuna; and that it has the expertise to develop and manage the expansion of this program.

Linda Dorset

Wailuku Citizen

**To: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, Committee on Ways and Means
SB898 SD1, Relating to Kupuna Housing**

**Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 9:30am
Location: CR 211 & Videoconference**

LATE

My name is Jessica Gazmen, and I am an employee of an agency that participates in the Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry System for homeless services, Maui County. Personally and professionally, I am in SUPPORT of SB898 SD1, relating to kupuna housing.

I live at an apartment complex that has recently seen an approximate 200% increase in rent. Majority of the seniors living in the complex are at risk of homelessness due to the substantial increase and being on fixed income. A 78 years old tenant who was featured on Maui Now last year shared with the community that despite having health issues, he is trying to find employment just to stay housed.

I am also a case manager for homeless individuals and families. Within my current caseload, 50% of the households contain at least one kupuna (62+ years old). Though their housing history may be different, one factor that has remained constant is that there are not enough financial resources to ensure they remain housed until they find any type of affordable housing or living situation.

Should this bill be passed, kupunas are given peace of mind that there is a program that can help prevent them from sleeping in cars, beaches, parks or in condensed living situations among friends or family members. Rental assistance, though it may be temporary, has the opportunity to allow kupunas to live comfortably and with dignity within their own homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB898 SD1.

Sincerely,

Jessica Gazmen

District 5

LATE

TO: THE HONORABLE DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
THE HONORABLE GILBERT S.C. KEITH-AGARAN, VICE CHAIR
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

RE: SENATE BILL 898 RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Wednesday, 2/22/23

9:30 AM; Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee. My name is Maria Santiago. I'm a current undergraduate social work student enrolled at University of Hawaii at Manoa. However these opinions are my own and do not represent the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a testimony in strong support of SB 898, which would temporarily expand the State Rent Supplement Program to target kupuna who are 62 years of age and older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

According to the 2021 United States Census 19.6% of Hawaii's population include individuals who are 65 years and over. Compared with other age groups the elderly population is more likely to live alone or live in a smaller household setting. During the 2015-2019 period about 24% of total households in Hawaii were one person households. For the same time period 19.1% of the elderly population lived alone. Many elderly individuals no longer hold jobs and now live on a reduced or fixed income. Financial sustainability is a big challenge if an elderly person does not have sufficient resources to support themselves.

Cost of rent here in Hawaii is very high for every resident living in Hawaii. But it may impact the elderly population more because they are more likely on a fixed monthly income. Individuals on a fixed income have a more difficult time paying for what they need and end up cutting back on essentials needed, such as food, medication, and to pay for basic needs. Part of Hawaii's culture is to take care of the kupuna, who have given back to their communities and younger generations of Hawaii. I stand in strong support of SB 898, as I believe it will provide our kupuna with the care and advocacy that they deserve from the State of Hawaii and its communities, through security of housing.

Thank you,

Maria Santiago

808-269-6327