

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKUPŪNAE 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO  
ACTING 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

Testimony of  
DAWN N.S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE

Wednesday, February 28, 2024  
10:00 AM  
State Capitol Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

In Consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1834 HD1  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

House Bill 1831 HD1 proposes to increase funding for the Department of Human Services (DHS) homeless service contracts. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) supports this bill.**

The DLNR has increasing numbers of homeless on most of its properties. The Department's mission is to "enhance, protect, conserve and manage Hawaii's unique and limited natural, cultural and historic resources held in public trust for current and future generations of the people of Hawai'i nei, and its visitors, in partnership with others from the public and private sectors." Although we dedicate one full time, and one part time staff to homelessness, their focus is on ensuring our lands are managed in furtherance of our mission. Thus, we rely on the services contracted by DHS to guide people on our lands out of homelessness.

During the past two years, we have noticed a decreasing ability of the contracted agencies to service our homeless populations. Shelters are often full, or unavailable due to a lack of adequate staff. Staff turnover has led to loss of records, meaning that homeless individuals lose their place in line for housing or fall out of housing and cannot get back in because there are no records. When a case manager leaves, or even worse, the whole agency goes under, the people who had history with the homeless population in their service area are gone, and all progress goes away. The homeless people living on our lands get frustrated with the process and give up. As land managers we are left with a homeless population who has no place to go and is receiving no assistance while they wait.

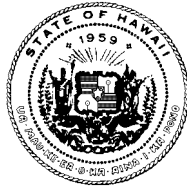
If there is housing but we lack the people who connect the homeless to the housing, the addition of housing units becomes futile. Additional funding for contractors will address the problem of turnover, perhaps lead

to better candidates, and allow people to stay in these important jobs. Without good and consistent staffing at the service agencies, we will never solve our homeless problem.

DLNR supports the Committees on Health and Homelessness and Human Services Committee Report recommendation to consider a 20% increase, rather than a 5% increase, as requested by the Department of Human Services, provided it does not affect the Governor's budget priorities.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

March 13, 2024

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

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 1834 HD1 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: Friday, March 15, 2024, 1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 225, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, provided that any appropriation does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget. DHS notes that the executive budget includes a request for \$1,320,000 for homeless services, which is a 5% increase in funding for homeless services contracts. DHS prefers and respectfully requests that the appropriation be through the executive budget and is recurring.

**PURPOSE:** This bill appropriates funds to increase the Department of Human Services' homeless programs office base budget. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1).

The Committees on Health & Homelessness and Human Services (HD1) amended the measure by:

- (1) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (2) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

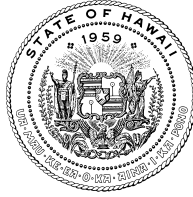
DHS agrees that additional funds are needed for homeless services contracted by the Homeless Programs Office (HPO). Currently, the total amount of state funding for homeless services contracts is \$26,425,616, which includes contracted services in the base budget and services that are currently funded only for the current fiscal biennium. While DHS is requesting a 5% increase in the executive budget, an increase of 20%, or \$5,285,123, would better reflect increases in operating costs for providers over the past nine years. However, we understand this Legislature is grappling with Maui Wildfire recovery needs.

DHS currently contracts for a broad range of homeless services, including shelter, outreach, civil legal services, housing placement, state emergency grant program, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing (Housing First). The last major increase in funding for the core components of the homeless services system was in 2016.

Since 2016, operating costs for providers have increased dramatically. For example, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average weekly wage in Hawaii increased nearly 36% between 2016 and 2023 – from \$896 in the first quarter of 2016 to \$1,218 in the first quarter of 2023. Other operating costs, such as transportation and utility costs, have also increased by an estimated 30% during this same period.

The number of people experiencing homelessness is also increasing after years of steady decline. Between 2022 and 2023, the statewide Point in Time count found that homelessness increased by 4%, from 5,967 to 6,223 individuals. DHS anticipates that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness will likely continue to increase due to the continuing high rental costs and lack of available low-income housing inventory, the continuing economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Maui wildfires.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

Testimony of **John Mizuno**  
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness  
Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**  
Friday, March 15, 2024  
1:00 p.m., Conference Room 225

In consideration of  
**House Bill No. 1834 HD1**  
**RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of this measure, provided that any appropriation does not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget. Additionally, I humbly request that the appropriation be through the executive budget and recurring.

One of the five priorities that Governor Green established for the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) is to **clear the obstacles along the pathway from the street to home**. This measure will provide the resources to service providers to cover the true cost of services, which will reduce understaffing issues and high turnover.

In September my office conducted one-on-one interviews with the state contracted homeless service providers to better understand the State's response to homeless services, the obstacles, and to identify the improvements that are necessary to better serve our homeless population. The common theme was identified amongst all interviews: **The current funding is inadequate and has not been increased for 6-12 years**. The following are a few of the obstacles service providers are facing:

- Low employee retention rates due to the inability to pay living wages and benefits.
- The inability to staff adequately, due to contracts only allowing for a small number of staff. This has resulted in an overwhelming provider to client ratio.
- Administrative and maintenance costs are not always covered by the contracts, which has forced service providers to seek outside funding.

Providers want to continue to serve and decrease the homeless population, and we must provide them with the resources to do so. I appreciate the legislature for addressing this issue and am in strong support of this measure.

Mahalo,

John Mizuno  
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness



**HB1834 HD1**  
**RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

March 15, 2024

1:00 PM

Conference Room 225

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1834** which appropriates funds to increase the Department of Human Services' (DHS) homeless programs office (HPO) budget and to ensure that service providers contracted through the HPO can address their employees' needs related to the high cost of living in Hawai'i. **OHA believes that these services are critical to addressing the severe social and economic disparities faced by Native Hawaiians.**

Native Hawaiians are consistently overrepresented in homelessness, comprising the single largest ethnic group of those experiencing homelessness in Hawai'i. On O'ahu, Native Hawaiians accounted for 41% of those experiencing homelessness in 2023. This represents an increase of 16% from 2022 in total number of Native Hawaiians counted in the Point in Time (PIT) count. It also includes a 39% increase in the number of unsheltered Native Hawaiians counted, and a 2% increase in the number of sheltered Native Hawaiians counted. In the counties of Hawai'i, Maui, and Kaua'i, Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders accounted for approximately 28.79% of all people experiencing homelessness.

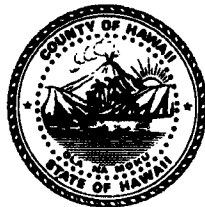
Homeless Programs Office contracts for critical services to address homelessness. We support increased funding for the programs they fund. We know that the programs they fund only succeed when they are able to retain dedicated staff. OHA supports increased funding for the programs and especially for the hard-working staff that administer those programs. We believe that increased, sustained funding for HPO can really help move the needle and ultimately improve outcomes for Native Hawaiians.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to share our mana'o and urges the Legislature to **PASS HB1834**. Mahalo nui loa.

**Mitchell D. Roth**  
*Mayor*

**Deanna S. Sako**  
*Managing Director*

**Robert H. Command**  
*Deputy Managing Director*



**Susan K. Kunz**  
*Housing Administrator*

**Harry M. Yada**  
*Assistant Housing Administrator*

**County of Hawai'i**  
**Office of Housing and Community Development**

1990 Kino'ole Street, Suite 102 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8379 • Fax (808) 961-8685  
Existing Housing: (808) 959-4642 • Fax (808) 959-9308  
Kona: (808) 323-4300 • Fax (808) 323-4301

March 14, 2024

**TESTIMONY FOR COMMENT IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1834, HD1**

**A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

**Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair**

**Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair**

**Hearing Date: Friday, March 15, 2024, at 1:00 PM**

**Place of Hearing: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference**

Aloha Honorable Chairs San Buenaventura and Aquino, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

On behalf of the Office of Housing and Community Development of the County of Hawai'i, I am providing testimony in **support of House Bill 1834, HD1**, which appropriates funds to increase the Department of Human Services' Homeless Programs Office base budget.

Homelessness remains one of the most pressing issues for the State and County of Hawai'i. The demand for homeless services is expected to significantly increase due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of affordable housing, and the impacts of the Maui wildfires on existing resources, as noted by the Department of Human Services.

Homeless Programs Office contract providers deliver critical services, such as homeless outreach, shelter, family assessment centers, civil legal services, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, state homeless emergency grants, and housing placement.

HB 1834, HD1, requests a one-time increase in the Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320,000 to assist with providers' costs as contracts have not kept up with the increasing costs of doing business.

While this amount is beneficial, the OHCD concurs with the Department of Human Service's request for an increase of 20% (or \$5,285,123) made during a Jan. 16, 2024, informational briefing before a Senate Joint Committee on Ways and Means and Health and Human Services. Additionally, this funding should be recurring.



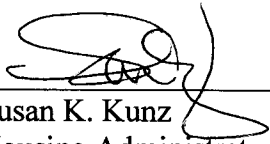
March 14, 2024

Page 2

This request for additional funds will help the Homeless Programs Office to increase all state contract amounts to better cover costs associated with delivering these necessary homeless services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of this measure.

Mahalo,



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Susan K. Kunz  
Housing Administrator





The Institute for Human Services, Inc.  
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

**TO:** Honorable Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
  
Honorable Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino  
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

**FROM:** Angie Knight, Community Relations Manager  
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

**RE:** [HB1834 HD1](#) - Relating to the Department of Human Services.

**HEARING:** Friday, March 15, 2024 at 1:00 PM

**POSITION:** IHS **strongly supports** the passing of HB1834 with amendments.

For over 45 years, The Institute for Human Services (IHS) has offered critical support to those experiencing homelessness, from emergency shelter and meals to healthcare, job training, and housing. Such services come at a cost that often cannot be passed onto our clients, so we rely on government contracts supplemented with private donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations.

Currently, the HPO contracts are meant to cover core services such as emergency shelters, general outreach, case management and housing navigation, homeless prevention for those at risk for eviction and rapid rehousing programs for those already unsheltered. However, these government contracts have increased minimally over a decade and have not been adjusted for inflation or wage compression due to increased minimum wage or other operating cost increases.

HB1834 requests a 5% increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office. While we appreciate this amount, **we suggest an increase of 20% in the base budget for homeless services.** Since 2015, the minimum wage has increased from \$7.75 to \$14 an hour, while the HPO contracts have not increased over the past nine years. This increase will not only assist in helping the HPO increase their administration staff, but it will also help fill the funding gap predominantly shouldered by frontline staff: guest services, shelter case managers, and housing navigators and outreach specialists. With a narrowed funding gap, service providers can increase the wages for these critical positions to be competitive with the current workforce demand and increase our staffing.

To truly end cycles of homelessness, wraparound, holistic solutions are needed. Our services are rooted in a mission to equip individuals with the skills and resources to live independently in permanent housing for the long term. IHS takes a comprehensive approach to homelessness, including supportive medical and psychiatric care. Hence, we have begun to tap into Medicaid funding to help fill some of the gaps, allowing us to continue delivering our programs. However, the administrative burden of doing so requires building greater capacity to do so which includes more funding. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



## CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834 HD1: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

**TO:** Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
**FROM:** Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i  
**Hearing:** **Friday, 3-15-24; 1:00 pm; CR 225 & videoconference**

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Acquino, and Members, Committee on Health and Human Services:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB 1834 HD1**, which appropriates funds to increase the Department of Human Services' (DHS) Homeless Programs Office budget. I am Rob Van Tassell, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

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 children, families, elders, 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.

We are a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition, comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 people across the state. We have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations

Our hearts go out to the people undergoing the Maui tragedies. CCH is actively working to support Maui residents with case management, and help with basic needs. **We also recognize that the State has other critical issues that only will become more urgent and impact an ever-wider number of our local residents, if attention and funding are reduced.**

**Catholic Charities Hawai'i respectfully requests that you support on increase of 20% for the base budget of the DHS/Homeless Program's Office (HPO).** This amount is needed to both maintain services and expand them to more fully address our housing crisis. Many contracts have not been increased in over 10 years. Inflation and competition for workers has made it very difficult for homeless service providers to recruit and then maintain dedicated workers. These workers are key to gaining trust and then helping people to move from the streets to housing. Some programs may have had to decrease services due to budget constraints. Catholic Charities Hawaii is also experiencing difficulties hiring and retaining workers for these demanding positions. Increased funding to the base budget of DHS/HPO is essential to significantly reduce homelessness.

Local communities all over our State are demanding action to end homelessness. **This requires adequate increased funding to organizations to ensure that they can address the high cost of living for their employees.** Please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813 if you have any questions.



# Hawai`i True Cost Coalition

DATE: March 15, 2024  
TIME: 1:00PM  
PLACE: Via Videoconference and Conference Room 225  
BILL: HB1834 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services  
Committee: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawai`i True Cost Coalition (TCC), we are writing in support of HB1834 HD1 which would appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services' (DHS) homeless programs.

The TCC is comprised of over 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai`i nonprofit organizations.

We applaud the Legislature for recognizing the need to increase funding for DHS' homeless service contracts with nonprofit organizations, especially in light of the current budget situation. As the bill's preamble states, these contracts have not been increased for over a decade, while program expenses including wages, utilities and administrative costs have all increased. Despite the rising costs, local nonprofits have continued to provide these critical services, relying on their own resources to fill this gap, which is no longer sustainable. This bill will help to ensure the continuation of these services.

We also encourage the Legislature to support the Department of Human Services' and Department of Health's budget requests which includes increased funding for other purchase of service contracts that have also not been increased in many years.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB1834 HD1.



# STEADFAST PACIFIC CORPORATION

888 Iwilei Road · Suite 250 · Honolulu, Hawaii 96817 · (808) 599-6230 · Fax: (808) 521-7667

March 14, 2024

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1834 HD1 WITH COMMENTS: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
FROM: Steadfast Housing Development Corporation (SHDC)  
Hearing: **Friday, March 15th, 2024 at 1:00pm, Room 225 & via videoconference**

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services:

Steadfast Housing Development Corporation (SHDC) Db: Steadfast Pacific is a non-profit provider serving a vulnerable population of chronic homeless/homeless individuals living with a severe mental illness (SMI) and/or SMI with a co-occurring illness since 1989. The CRISIS of homelessness makes this measure so important to pass. HB 1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320,000 however, although appreciated, it is not enough. We respectfully request an increase of 20%. Over the past 10 years, SHDC has been working with the same budget despite increases in operational costs. Retention of front line staff has been difficult and the increased demands from the community have made this field untenable for many. Expectations of addressing homelessness in Hawai'i needs dedicated programs like SHDC and individuals able to work with enough resources available to them.

SHDC is a member of Partners In Care (PIC) and join with our partner members in this request to ensure that government funding is adequate and sustains the true costs of providing governmental services by our organization. Increases in budgets at the State Department of Human Services and the State Department of Health will enable the system to provide services to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Our budgets and costs affirm polls conducted by the True Cost Coalition which have shown that many non-profits are working at a budget deficit for state contracts and they are unable to apply certain costs that are encumbered during the contract cycle. Addressing these costs will benefit the entire state and those receiving services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support HB 1834 HD1** Relating to the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,

Linda S. Ahue  
Executive Director



# HAWAI' APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice**  
**SUPPORT HB1834 HD1** – Relating to the Department of Human Services  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
Friday, March 15, 2024 at 1:00 PM, Conference Room 225

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **supporting HB1834 HD1 and an increase in funding for the Department of Human Services' Homeless Programs Office**. This funding increase is not only important to ensure support for the critical homelessness services described below, but also to ensure that the funding for these programs adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations.

Currently, the amounts paid to nonprofits under these government contracts are often insufficient to cover the actual costs of administering the programs, requiring Hawai'i nonprofits to engage in separate fundraising efforts to supplement contract amounts, and making it increasingly difficult to pay program staff a living wage. As a result of inadequate contract amounts, government programs intended to provide support and increase financial stability of struggling Hawai'i residents can perpetuate the very problems the legislature has been working diligently to address with its work on "ALICE" (Asset-Limited Income-Constrained Employed) and the challenges faced by Hawai'i's struggling working families. To create a healthier economic ecosystem, it is critical that contract amounts for governmental services be increased so that Hawai'i's nonprofits can be on solid financial footing and their staff can earn living, thriving wages.

While Hawai'i Appleseed does not perform direct services under the contracts covered by this bill, recognizing the importance of adequately funded social services contracts, we are supportive of the efforts of the [Hawaii True Cost Coalition](#), comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 of people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawai'i nonprofit organizations. We join them in requesting your support on HB1834 HD1.

The programs that HB1834 HD1 would support have played a critical role in reducing Hawai'i's homelessness rates over recent years, and these services are as important as ever. The programs funded by HB1834 HD1 include the following:

**Outreach and Civil Legal Services:** Without outreach services, we could not connect people to the proven effective programs such as Housing First that bring them out of homelessness. Outreach teams connect those on the streets—youth, families, kupuna, adults, and people suffering from mental illness—to all available housing options: Emergency Shelters, Transitional Shelters, Housing First, Rapid Rehousing with rent stipends, and/or treatment (i.e., substance use). For many chronically homeless mentally ill persons, it can take 50 or more individual outreach contacts spread

out over several months or even years to build up trust and move them off the streets. Outreach teams may also do wound care, distribute hygiene kits or snacks, and offer to obtain identification documents.

**Rapid Rehousing:** Rapid rehousing is designed to help individuals and families exit homelessness quickly and return to permanent housing by providing, rental stipends, assistance in finding housing, and case management services. The Urban Institute released a 2018 report that found Rapid Rehousing to be successful in helping families and veterans to move into housing units in the private rental market faster than they would on their own and for a lower cost. Most do NOT become homeless again, although many struggle with ongoing housing affordability, like many other low-income renters. According to the report, “Rapid Rehousing could be a scalable and cost-effective crisis response intervention that could help communities address homelessness more effectively.” This is a program that works, and it should be consistently and adequately funded.

**Housing First:** Housing First targets chronically homeless individuals and families with disabling conditions (mental health, substance use, and physical disabilities). It provides subsidized housing, case management services, and other support services. According to a UH Center on the Family study, Housing First saves an estimated \$6,197 per month in health care costs alone, for each homeless participant in Housing First. For a projected 301 participants, that could add up to over \$22 million each year in savings. On average nationally, the Housing First program has kept its clients in permanent housing 85 percent of the time, and local data suggests an even higher success rate in Hawaii.

For the reasons listed above we urge the passing of HB1834 HD1, with appropriations sufficient to cover the true costs of the homeless programs covered by the bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BILL HB1834 HD1  
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: March 15, 2024, 1pm, Room 225

Aloha Chair Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports HB1834 HD1, which appropriates funds to increase the department of human services' homeless programs office base budget.

As we are all aware, there is a serious homeless epidemic occurring in Hawai'i, and it is clear additional financial support for effective and coordinated services and the State's response and the many providers working to address needs of our houseless population is critically needed. Increasing the base budget of the Department of Human Services homeless programs office's homeless service contracts will secure homeless outreach, shelter, case management, and the attendant services homeless individuals need to move from the street to transitional housing. DHS fundamentally needs more support to be able to increase supportive and permanent housing for homeless individuals.

The appropriation of funds outlined in HB1834 HD1 is a necessary step towards alleviating the hardships of our homeless population and facilitating their transition to stable housing and a first step in the additional services DHS provides, such as accessing healthcare, employment, and educational opportunities. By providing support and assistance to those experiencing homelessness, we can help them rebuild their lives and reduce the growing economic and social costs of houselessness in our State.

We urge you to pass HB1834 HD1 to provide the resources needed to make meaningful progress towards ending homelessness and building a more equitable community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

Kayla Keehu- Alexander  
Vice President, Community Impact  
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Reeder".

Adam Reeder  
Manager, Safety Net  
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold  
Chief Operating Officer  
Aloha United Way



# HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Vonnell Ramos, President  
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President  
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer  
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director

*Network Membership*

*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i  
Big Island Substance Abuse  
Council*

*Bobby Benson Center  
Child and Family Service  
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i  
Collins Consulting, LLC*

*Domestic Violence Action Center  
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*

*Family Programs Hawai`i  
Family Support Hawai`i  
Friends of the Children's Justice  
Center of Maui*

*Get Ready Hawai`i  
Hale Kipa, Inc.*

*Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.  
Hawai`i Children's Action  
Network*

*Hawai`i Health & Harm  
Reduction Center  
Hawai Island Community'  
Health Center*

*Ho`ola Na Pua  
Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i  
Ka Hale Pomaika`i*

*Kahi Mohala  
Kokua Kalihi Valley  
Kaua`i Planning and Action  
Alliance*

*Maui Youth and Family Services  
Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native  
Hawaiian Health Care  
Systems*

*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.  
Parents and Children Together  
PHOCUSED*

*PFLAG - Kona, Big Island  
Planned Parenthood of the  
Great Northwest, Hawaii  
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*

*Residential Youth Services  
& Empowerment (RYSE)*

*Salvation Army Family  
Intervention Services*

*Sex Abuse Treatment Center  
Susannah Wesley Community  
Center*

*The Catalyst Group*

March 14, 2024

Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair  
And members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834 HB 1 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports HB 1834 HD 1  
Relating to Homelessness.

Even before the Maui wildfire disaster, Hawaii's rate of homelessness was  
among the highest in the nation. Current funding meets only a fraction of  
the need for services.

Organizations providing services to homeless persons are experiencing  
great difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff. The salaries that can be  
offered with the current level of funding are not competitive with wages in  
less stressful and demanding jobs. "If my landlord raises my rent, I won't be  
able to afford it," one longtime homeless outreach worker told me.

The Salvation Army Family Intervention Services recently announced the  
closure of its boys safe house emergency shelter on Maui due to critical  
staffing shortages.. The girls safe house operated by Maui Youth and  
Family Services is seriously understaffed, while dealing with twice the  
number of residents compared to the period prior to the wildfire.

HYSN recommends that the homeless services budget be increased by  
20%.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark  
Executive Director





*Inspiring Hope, Changing Lives*

Visit us on the web: [www.hopeserviceshawaii.org](http://www.hopeserviceshawaii.org)

Connect via email: [info@hopeserviceshawaii.org](mailto:info@hopeserviceshawaii.org)

HOPE Help Line: 808-935-3050

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Committee Chair, Vice-Chair and Members  
FROM: Brandee Menino, CEO, Hope Services Hawai'i, Inc.  
Hearing: HHS on 03-15-24

Aloha,

My name is Brandee Menino and I am the CEO of Hope Services Hawai'i, which is Hawai'i Island's largest nonprofit homeless services provider. We work in collaboration with providers across Hawai'i Island, using evidence-based practices to help our neighbors avoid and overcome homelessness, and achieve above-average results in helping people get housed and stay housed. **We could not serve people at the level we do without the support of our partners in state government, especially at the Department of Human Services (DHS), and specifically at their Homeless Programs Office (HPO).**

I am writing to support HB 1834, the Department of Human Services' Homeless Programs Office budget appropriation. This bill would increase their budget by 5%. However, I **request an amendment to increase their budget by 20% to reflect the actual costs of the services they provide.** This reflects increased operating costs and increased numbers of people utilizing their services, including people experiencing homelessness.

Please support this measure and increase DHS' HPO budget.

Mahalo,

  
Brandee Menino,  
Chief Executive Officer

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## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834, HD 1

**TO:** Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, & HHS Committee Members

**FROM:** Nikos Leverenz  
Grants & Advancement Manager

**DATE:** March 15, 2024 (1:00 PM)

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Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) **strongly supports** HB 1834, HD 1, which appropriates funds to increase the base budget of the Department of Human Services' Homeless Programs Office (HPO).

HHHRC provides homelessness services in Regions 1 and 6 on O'ahu and is a member of [Partners in Care \(PIC\)](#), 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. This bill currently requests an increase in the HPO budget of 5% (\$1.32 million), which is appreciated given the current demands on the state budget. However, in alignment with PIC and other non-profit members of the [True Cost Coalition](#), we respectfully request an increase of 20% so that service providers are better able to meet increased operational costs and increased demand for services.

Recruitment and retention of front line staff have become increasingly difficult with flatlined salary structures and acute increases in the cost of living in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many employees, including those with valuable lived experience with homelessness, behavioral health issue, and criminal legal system involvement, have taken part-time jobs in the service sector or have departed for the service sector.

HHHRC'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, and have also been deeply impacted by trauma related to histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

# 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 STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1834 HD1 WITH COMMENTS: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Senate Committee on Health & Human Services  
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)  
Hearing: **Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at 1:00pm, Room 225 & via videoconference**

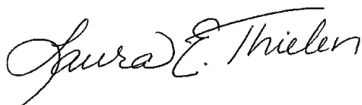
Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino and Members of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services:

Partners In Care (PIC) is a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers, individuals with lived experience and concerned community members. The **CRISIS** of homelessness makes this measure so important to pass. HB 1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5% which would be an increase of \$1,320,000. While this amount is appreciated, we respectfully **request an increase of 20%**. For the last decade, agencies focused on addressing the needs of our neighbors on the streets, have been working with the same budget despite increases in operational costs. Retention of front line staff has been difficult for agencies and the increased demands from the community have made this field untenable for many. Expectations of addressing homelessness in Hawai'i needs the dedicated programs and individuals able to work with enough resources available to them.

PIC is a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition which is comprised of 50 community based nonprofit organizations, serving over 500,000 people across the state, that have come together to ensure that government funding adequately and sustainably covers the true costs of providing governmental services by Hawaii nonprofit organizations. Increases in budgets at the State Department of Human Services and the State Department of Health will enable the system to provide services to those who are the most vulnerable in our community. Polls conducted by the True Cost Coalition have shown that many non profits are working at a budget deficit for state contracts and they are unable to apply certain costs that are encumbered during the contract cycle. Addressing these costs will benefit the entire state and those receiving services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony **in support HB 1834 HD1** Relating to the Department of Human Services.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Thielen  
Executive Director  
Partners In Care



**Parents And  
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1834 HD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

**TO:** Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair Aquino, & Members,  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services  
**FROM:** Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO  
**DATE:** March 15, 2024 at 1:00 PM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1834 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services**, which appropriates funds to increase homeless service contract amounts so that contracted providers receive funding for the true cost of the services provided.

Homelessness is one of the most complex, acute and visible crises Hawai'i is dealing with. Service providers work under the most challenging circumstances and must have specific skills to both engage individuals experiencing homelessness and navigate medical, legal and housing systems. They have to be supported by high-quality organizations that are sustainable and state funding is an important part of that. State contracts that do not increase over time as operating costs increase make this important work unsustainable.

As a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition, we are painfully aware of the need for this type of increase across the health and human services sector. Please support this proposed increase.

Founded in 1968, PACT is a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or [rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org](mailto:rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

**HB-1834-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 9:52:26 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/15/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alika Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As homelessness has been a persistent problem in Hawaii, I support increasing the HPO budget by a minimum of the 5% recommended by this bill. If at all possible I would strongly advocate for an increase closer to 20% as the cost of housing and running programs keeps increasing, providers are struggling to hire and maintain staff, and most of the program grants don't cover the true costs.

**LATE**

**HB-1834-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/14/2024 3:35:56 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/15/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support the passage of HB1834, which provides for an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office (HPO). **I urge the current increase of 5% be amended to be an increase of 20% in the base budget for homeless services.** Despite minimum wage increases from \$7.75/hr in 2015 to \$14/hr now, and inflationary increases in many other services and supplies, it is my understanding the HPO contracts have not increased over these 9 years. Having served as a volunteer on IHS's board during the past 3 decades, I know how important funding is to provide effective outreach and administrative services to help change lives of our neighbors living on the street. The homeless services mission is so much broader than just providing shelter housing. Holistic wrap-around services address mental illness, substance abuse addiction, unemployment, lack of governmental benefits, family problems, educational needs, and much more. Only through this holistic effort can individuals be able to overcome homelessness and become self-sufficient individuals in our community.

That goal warrants a greater increase than 5% over 9 years.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Ellen Carson, Honolulu, Hawaii

**HB-1834-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/12/2024 2:48:51 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/15/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an employee of the Dept of Human Services, I am seeing too many folks moving to the island with every intention of enjoying services provided for the homeless. Everyday we have people getting off the plane (who's ticket was paid to come here) and are able to get benefits immediately, who are able bodied but choose to not work and admit it's better to be homeless in Hawaii than in Michigan or California. The trend has increased since COVID. I would love services to go primarily for the local homeless, the ones who's options ran out or were never there to begin with, who have no where else to go but the streets or the beach. But I realize that would be "unconstitutional" so I would rather not see services increase and rather appropriate funds for programs that serve the Native community. Or funding to change our policy so people need to meet very specific residency criteria before being approved for services or benefits.