



COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

BILL SCR183 SD1  
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: April 10, 2024, 10am, Room 312

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Aiu, and Committee Members:

**Aloha United Way supports SCR183 SD1** which urges the department of the Attorney General to investigate and enforce applicable laws against landlords who are ending rental agreements to house FEMA-eligible households through the direct lease program or the Dept of Human Services Rental Assistance Program.

The devastating Maui wildfires in August 2023 displaced nearly 3,000 households, exacerbating the already critical housing crisis in Maui County. In response, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State have implemented short-term housing programs such as the Direct Lease Program and Rental Assistance Program to provide temporary shelter for affected households, but at highly inflated rental rates.

Like you, we are troubled by numerous reports of landlords terminating rental agreements with existing tenants to accommodate FEMA-eligible households at inflated rental rates through these programs. This unfair eviction practice undermines housing stability and raises concerns about fairness and tenant rights and begs for the State and FEMA to reexamine who this well-intentioned project is **harming even more ALICE and lower-income renting households on Maui, while benefitting owners who own multiple properties** and take every action possible to **revert this undesired outcome quickly.**

As an organization deeply committed to the well-being and stability of our community, Aloha United Way strongly urges the Department of the Attorney General to investigate and enforce applicable laws against landlords engaged in unfair eviction practices to house FEMA-eligible households, and to **act strongly to ensure even more local residents do not lose long-term housing stability for short-term financial gains** from homeowners. SCR183 SD1 is one positive initial action, and without action, even more landlords will exploit this option for disproportionately high rent as existing leases expire, leaving more Maui families affected with limited legal recourse

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR183 SD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Fink".

John Fink  
President & CEO  
Aloha United Way

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzanne Skjold".

Suzanne Skjold  
Chief Operating Officer  
Aloha United Way

**SCR-183-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/9/2024 7:55:50 PM

Testimony for HSG on 4/10/2024 10:00:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| John Fink           | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I encourage the Attorney General's office to investigate and enforce laws already on the books to prevent landlords from terminating rental agreements to house FEMA-eligible households. As there is no housing available, where are those displaced supposed to go when some landlord accepts triple the current rent? This appears not to have been very well thought out, as more people will move out if they are displaced and cannot find housing elsewhere at a reasonable rate to allow them to live their lives as they have been. I support SCR183 SD1.

Thank you.