

**LATE**

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

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

Testimony of **James Koshiba**  
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness  
Before the  
**Senate Committee on Housing**  
February 14, 2023  
1:01 p.m., Conference Room 225

In consideration of  
**Senate Bill 1442**  
**RELATING TO OHANA ZONES**

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Kanuha, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB1442 and to offer comments.

This bill is aligned with the Governor's priorities on homelessness, which includes an emphasis on non-traditional housing, such as kauhale, to quickly house people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Note that there is an executive budget request to appropriate \$15 million for FY24 and FY25 to the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) to continue and expand the 'Ohana Zones pilot program.

The Ohana Zones program provides an essential source of funding for innovative approaches to serve and house people experiencing homelessness, and to fill gaps in homeless housing and services that do not fit with other sources of funding. For example, communal, "village style" housing with shared facilities can help to address homelessness in Hawaii, given our unique history and culture. However, federal Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) funds for homelessness cannot be used for housing with shared bathroom facilities. Additional Ohana Zones funds will be essential to fill such gaps, and to support efforts like kauhale and other homegrown approaches to ending homelessness.

Additional funding for the Ohana Zones program is necessary due to the large number of people experiencing homelessness statewide. Hawaii has the second highest per capita rate of homelessness among the 50 states, and due to lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on people's financial, physical, and mental health, we may see an increase in homelessness over the next several years.

Past Ohana Zones appropriations via Act 235, SLH 2022, are already being contracted through the Counties to support transition services and supportive housing projects on Oahu; supportive housing on Maui; supportive housing on Kauai; and a multi-service project to end homelessness in Hawaii County. Additional Ohana Zones funding will support the development of new projects that can house and serve people experiencing homelessness statewide, including kauhale.

February 13, 2023

Page Two of Two

With regard to Section 2 of the bill and the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund construction related to ohana zones, I offer two comments:

(1) I would suggest that a position be added to whichever office is ultimately made responsible for deploying these capital improvement funds.

(2) If the intent is for the funds to be used to quickly house people experiencing homelessness, I would note that the exemptions enumerated in Section 3 of Act 235, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022, should also apply to Ohana Zone construction.

Mahalo for your consideration.

James Koshiba  
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness



**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

---

**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**  
S.B. NO. 1442, RELATING TO OHANA ZONES.

**BEFORE THE:**  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 14, 2023      **TIME:** 1:01 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 225

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Melissa L. Lewis, Deputy Attorney General

---

Chair Chang and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purposes of this bill are: (1) to appropriate \$15,000,000 for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program for costs related to operations, facility upkeep, provision of services, and administration; and (2) to authorize the Director of Finance to issue general obligation bonds in the amount of \$15,000,000 for the construction of facilities for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program.

Section 2 of the bill on page 2, line 14, to page 3, line 8, would authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds in the sum of \$15,000,000 and make an appropriation of the funds, but the bill does not include an expenditure clause that would allow the funds to be expended. If the intent is to have the Office of the Governor expend the funds, then the same wording in section 1, on page 1, lines 11-15, and page 2, lines 5-13, should be added to the end of section 2 of the measure as follows:

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of the governor for the purposes of this Act; provided that the governor shall transfer the expenditure authority to designated executive branch departments or agencies within a reasonable time.

Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the governor may transfer all or a portion of the appropriation in this section to the governor's designated executive branch agencies for expenditures incurred in implementing the ohana zones pilot program.

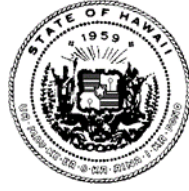
The governor's designated executive branch agencies may expend any appropriation transferred pursuant to this section for the performance of its duties under the ohana zones pilot program.

Alternatively, if the intent is for a designated department or agency to expend the funds, wording that identifies the designated department or agency should be added to the end of section 2 of the bill as follows:

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the [designated department or agency] for purposes of constructing facilities for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on 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

February 11, 2023

TO: The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Chair  
Senate Committee on Housing

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 1442 – RELATING TO OHANA ZONES.**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 1:01 p.m.  
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure and defers to the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness. DHS notes an executive budget request to appropriate \$15 million for FY24 and FY25 to the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) to continue the 'Ohana Zones pilot program. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation in this measure not replace or adversely impact priorities identified in the executive budget.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds for the 'Ohana Zones pilot program, including expenses relating to operations, upkeep of facilities, provision of services, and administrative costs. The bill also authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds for constructing facilities for the 'Ohana Zones pilot program.

The Department anticipates that a growing number of households will experience housing instability and face eviction due to the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting inflation. Following the economic recession in 2009, the statewide point-in-time

count of homeless individuals increased from 5,782 to a high of 7,921 in 2016 – an increase of 2,139 people (36.9% increase).

Additionally, the pandemic has further exposed the need for the State and counties to develop safer shelter options for unaccompanied youth and youth whose families are experiencing homelessness or living in crowded spaces. When families are experiencing housing instability, frequently, older youth double up with family members or friends; these older youth may stay at multiple homes to not overburden the families where they are staying. The housing instability impacts their health, well-being, and ability to attend school. More resources are needed to provide stable housing options for unaccompanied youth or youth experiencing services.

There is a critical need to continue and further build upon the innovative community-based shelter and housing support programs initiated through the 'Ohana Zones pilot program. Notably, this measure will provide capital funding to maintain existing homeless projects and to construct new facilities. Act 209, SLH 2018, established the 'Ohana Zones pilot program as a three-year pilot project with an initial sunset date of June 30, 2021. Act 128, SLH 2019, extended the pilot program to June 30, 2023. Act 235, SLH 2022, extended the pilot program to June 30, 2026.

Given the projected increases in demand for homeless services, there is a need to sustain and expand the 'Ohana Zones pilot program to provide effective services and expand the available statewide bed inventory.

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

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1442

TO: Chair Chang, Vice Chair Kanuha, & Housing Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz  
Grants & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 14, 2022 (1:01 PM)

---

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHRC) **supports** SB 1442, which (1) appropriates funds for the ohana zones pilot program, including expenses relating to operations, upkeep of facilities, provision of services, and administrative costs, and (2) authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds for the construction of facilities for the ohana zones pilot program.

Ohana zones have been useful mechanism to address unsheltered homelessness in recent years.

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 Hawaii 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.

# 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 SB1442, RELATING TO OHANA ZONES**

TO: Senate Committee on Housing

FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)

**Hearing: Tuesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1:01pm, Conference Room 225/videoconference**

Chair Chang and Members of the House Committee on Housing:

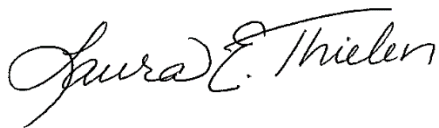
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT of SB1442 RELATING TO OHANA ZONES.**

Partners In Care (PIC), a coalition of more than 60 non-profit homelessness providers and concerned organizations, works on Oahu to end homelessness. The creation of the Ohana Zones has enabled new programs to be created within the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing. Many of the programs piloted through the Ohana Zones have proven to be beneficial to the community in addressing homelessness. We would like to see these programs funded through this program to continue with an appropriation of \$15million. Once programs have been established and reviewed for their effectiveness, we would like to see them move into the general budget and be added to the core services for homelessness and housing. Until that time, securing an appropriation is paramount.

The additional \$15 million appropriated to Ohana Zones for the purpose of constructing facilities for the ohana zone programs, will ensure that new resources including shelter for individuals will be available.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1442.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Thielen  
Executive Director  
Partners In Care





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

**The State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Housing  
Tuesday, February 14, 2023  
Conference Room 225, 1:01 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair  
RE: Support for S.B. 1442 Relating to Ohana Zones

Aloha Chair Chang 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. 1442** which appropriates funds for the ohana zones pilot program contract and authorizes the issuance of general obligations bonds for the constructions of facilities for the ohana zone program.

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. 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 and others from facing housing crisis. Funding the Ohana zone pilot program allows the continuation of these innovative solutions that address the housing and homelessness issues.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to support S.B. 1442.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i E. Lopez". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Keali'i Lopez, State Director



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Housing  
Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 1:01 pm  
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

### **SB 1442, Relating to Ohana Zones**

Dear Chair Chang, Vice Chair Kanuha, and members of the Committee on Housing,

We are in **support** of SB 1442, which appropriates funds for the Ohana Zones pilot program and authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds for the construction of facilities for the Ohana Zones pilot program.

Family Promise of Hawai'i is a nonprofit working to prevent and end homelessness for families with children. As a frontline service provider, we see that there is an urgent need to increase our community's capacity to serve families with children experiencing homelessness, particularly through emergency shelter and wraparound services. Several emergency shelter sites for families have closed in recent years, and non-congregate emergency shelter spaces for families continue to be scarce<sup>1</sup>.

The need in the community is great: An estimated **1 in 30 young children in Hawai'i experience homelessness** annually, according to the latest federal estimate<sup>2</sup>. Children under age 1 in the US are more likely to experience homelessness than people of any other age<sup>3</sup>. In just the state's public schools alone, the Hawai'i Department of Education counted **3,254 students** who experienced homelessness in the 2021-22 school year<sup>4</sup>.

**Homelessness has long-term effects on children's mental and physical well-being** and is linked to "delays in children's language, literacy, and social-emotional development, potentially setting a course for cascading negative consequences"<sup>5</sup>. Additional funding for Ohana Zones, particularly those that would help children and families "find and transition into permanent housing"<sup>6</sup> through emergency shelter and wraparound services, would have a lasting impact for our community. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ryan Catalani".

Ryan Catalani  
Executive Director

---

<sup>1</sup> Housing Inventory Count: <https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/system-reports>

<sup>2</sup> Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles: <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles-2021.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Research on Early Childhood Homelessness: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/reports/research-early-childhood-homelessness>

<sup>4</sup> Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/data/>

<sup>5</sup> Policy Statement on Meeting the Needs of Families with Young Children Experiencing and At Risk of Homelessness: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ecd/echomelessnesspolicystatement.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Act 209, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2018: [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2018/SLH2018\\_Act209.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2018/SLH2018_Act209.pdf)

**SB-1442**

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 7:28:59 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/14/2023 1:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The only way to end houselessness is to provide enough permanent and truly affordable housing to meet the housing demand. That will require consistent investments of public money to subsidize the development of enough affordable housing units, as well as enough resources to subsidize rent for very low-income families who still do not earn enough for affordable housing rents. That public money should come from enhanced revenue from taxes on wealth.

It will take hundreds of millions of dollars every year for years in order to meet this demand. We must get started right away, which is why passing tax revenue bills this year is critical. But in the mean time, the houselessness crisis continues to grow, and we need immediate stop-gap solutions for people experiencing houselessness. One such solution among the continuum of services needed to triage this crisis is the ‘Ohana Zones concept. Please support SB1442.