

MAR 08 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ESTABLISH A HOUSING
EQUITY AND WELLNESS TASK FORCE.

1 WHEREAS, housing security plays a crucial role in
2 preventing suicides and safeguarding mental health, as evidenced
3 by recent incidents of elderly community members experiencing
4 serious crises following eviction notices, underscoring the
5 disproportionate impact of the housing crisis on marginalized
6 groups, particularly middle- and lower-class elderly community
7 members; and

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9 WHEREAS, housing insecurity poses a significant risk for
10 Hawaii's kupuna, where the exorbitant cost of living amplifies
11 financial strain and exponentially increases the risk of
12 homelessness and displacement; and

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14 WHEREAS, working-class individuals constitute a significant
15 portion of the tenant population in the community, and there
16 exists an inherent injustice of rent increases outpacing
17 stagnant wages; as wages are the primary means by which tenants
18 afford their housing; and

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20 WHEREAS, Hawaii's kupuna are among the most vulnerable to
21 the housing crisis, which is exacerbated by the State's
22 prohibitive cost of living, with residents spending more income
23 on rent than in any other State; and

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25 WHEREAS, Hawaii residents statistically endure the most
26 unaffordable rental market in the country as over half of
27 households are living paycheck to paycheck, and approximately
28 forty-three percent of households are renters who spend nearly
29 half of their earnings on rent; and

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31 WHEREAS, current laws in Hawaii provide insufficient
32 protections for tenants, with month-to-month tenancies without
33 legal cause requiring only a forty-five day notice, leaving
34 vulnerable individuals with limited avenues to address the
35 threat of sudden eviction; and

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1 WHEREAS, homes and communities are integral to a person's
2 sense of identity, particularly the elderly, making them more
3 susceptible to the crises resulting from eviction, further
4 compounded by recent occurrences of mental health outbursts
5 among elderly community members facing eviction, highlighting
6 the urgent need for greater protections; now, therefore,

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8 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
9 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,
10 that the Department of Health is requested to establish a
11 Housing Equity and Wellness Task Force dedicated to studying the
12 effect of housing insecurity on mental health and well-being,
13 with a focus on vulnerable populations such as the elderly; and
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15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to
16 conduct a study on the effect of housing insecurity on mental
17 health and well-being, with a focus on vulnerable populations
18 such as the elderly; and
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force is requested to
21 submit a report and any findings and recommendations, including
22 proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty
23 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025; and
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
26 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Health, Executive
27 Director of the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development
28 Corporation, Executive Director of the Hawaii Public Housing
29 Authority, and Chairperson of the Hawaii State Council on Mental
30 Health.
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OFFERED BY: _____

