

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
House Committee on Finance
February 28, 2024
10:00 a.m., Conference Room 308

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

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, 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 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:

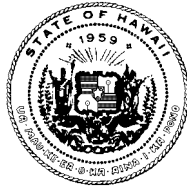
- Low employee retention rates due to the inability to pay living wages and benefits.
- The inability to staff adequately, due to contracts only allowing for a small number of staff. This has resulted in an overwhelming provider to client ratio.
- Administrative and maintenance costs are not always covered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

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

February 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

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

Hearing: February 28, 2024, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 308, 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).

Committees on Health & Homelessness and Human Services 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 will be 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.

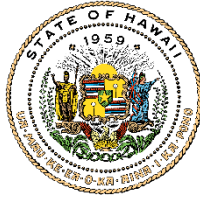
Since 2016, operating costs for providers have increased dramatically. For example, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average weekly wage in Hawaii increased nearly 36% between 2016 and 2023 – from \$896 in the first quarter of 2016 to \$1,218 in the first quarter of 2023. Other operating 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.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA '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.

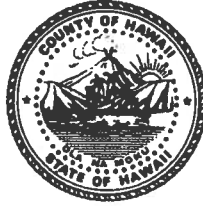
DLNR supports the Committees on Health and Homelessness and Human Services Committee Report recommendation to consider a 20% increase, rather than a 5% increase, as requested by the Department of Human Services, provided it does not affect the Governor's budget priorities.

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

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

February 26, 2024

TESTIMONY FOR COMMENT IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 1834, HD1

**A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATED TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 10:00 AM

Place of Hearing: Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

Aloha Honorable Chairs Yamashita and Kitagawa, and members of the Committee on Finance,

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.

HB 1834, HD1, requests an increase in the State's 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.

Homelessness continues to remain 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.

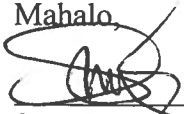
Homeless Programs Office contract providers deliver critical services, such as homeless outreach, shelter, family assessment centers, civil legal services, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing, state homeless emergency grants, and housing placement.



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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan K. Kunz', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Susan K. Kunz
Housing Administrator



**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 Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, & Members,
House Committee on Finance
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 28, 2024 at 10:00 AM

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 if you have any questions.



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

TO: Honorable Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita
Chair, House Committee on Finance

Honorable Rep. Lisa Kitagawa
Vice Chair, House Committee on Finance

FROM: Connie Mitchell, Executive Director
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

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

HEARING: Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 10:00 AM.

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.

HB1834 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5%. While this amount is appreciated, **we suggest an increase of 20%**. 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 our frontline staff: guest services, shelter case managers, and housing navigators and specialists. With a narrowed funding gap, we can increase the wages for these critical positions to be competitive with the current workforce demand.

To truly end cycles of homelessness, wraparound, holistic solutions are needed. Thus, IHS operates a comprehensive approach to homelessness, including supportive medical and psychiatric care. 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. 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 and also 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: House Committees on Finance
FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 2/28/24; 10:00 am; CR 308 & videoconference**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members, Committees on Finance:

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 more of a crisis that 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.





COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

BILL HB1834 HD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: February 28, 2024, 10am, Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way supports HB1834 HD1, which appropriates funds to increase the department of human services' homeless programs office base budget. Effective 7/1/3000.

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 that reads "Kayla Keehu-Alexander".

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

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

Suzanne Skjold
Chief Operating Officer
Aloha United Way



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

February 28, 2024

TO: Chair Kyle T. Yamashita
Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa
Members of the Committee on Finance

FR: Bruce Coppa, Member
Board of Directors
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc

RE: HB1834 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services. – **SUPPORT**

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.

HB1834 HD1 requests an increase in the State's Homeless Programs Office of 5%. While this amount is appreciated, **we suggest an increase of 20%**. 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 our frontline staff: guest services, shelter case managers, and housing navigators and specialists. With a narrowed funding gap, we can increase the wages for these critical positions to be competitive with the current workforce demand.

To truly end the cycles of homelessness, wraparound, holistic solutions are needed. Thus, IHS operates a comprehensive approach to homelessness, including supportive medical and psychiatric care. 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. 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 and also funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Hawai`i True Cost Coalition

DATE: February 28, 2024
TIME: 10:00AM
PLACE: Via Videoconference and Conference Room 308
BILL: HB1834 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services
Committee: House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, 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.

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 HB1834HD1 WITH COMMENTS: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)
Hearing: **Wednesday, February 28th, 2024 at 10:00 am, Room 308 & via videoconference**

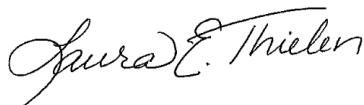
Chair Yamashita and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

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

HB-1834-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2024 4:16:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hope Carpenter	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

HB1834

Aloha Committee Members,

I'm Hope Carpenter and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I live on the east side of O'ahu and I work at a local church in Kāne'ōhe in the children's ministry department. I come before you in support of HB1834 because I am terrified to imagine one of my kids becoming houseless and left without any support from the state. The Department of Human Services deserves our financial support because they are taking care of those who were once children themselves. It is our kuleana to constantly serve our community and that includes those who are unfairly looked down upon due to their lack of housing. The Point in Time Count for 2023 by Partners In Care O'ahu finalized that 59% of homeless individuals are unsheltered, in which they live in unsafe and dehumanizing conditions. There's no justification for this, we need to do better. By giving the Department of Human Services an increase of their budget by 5%, we are already providing a way for the keiki of today to not have to fear what their future could look like. As an educator, I cannot force my children to make the choices that they do. However, I would like to know what our state is going to provide for my kids when they get older and know that they will have the support they need if harsh life circumstances alter the trajectory of their life. PIT also documented that there are 528 people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, further strengthening the vitality in raising the budget for the Department of Human Services. My father works for a local healthcare company with facilities across all the islands and the number one concern that is heard from the company is that if the workers aren't being compensated enough, their jobs will never fully come into fruition of true success for the healthcare to run properly. With that being said, if we don't continue to address the Department of Human Services needs such as providing a steady income for their workers then we won't ever see the results of 4,028 unsheltered people on O'ahu receiving the support they need. I never want to see one of my kids that I teach be left alone because the state denies the financial access for them to be supported. I also would never want to see my friends who work as nurses and first responders be denied a substantial income because of the lack of funding. However, this is a prevalent issue that the Department of Human Services say they face. We need to increase the funding for the Department of Human Services so the people who are actually doing the work to support our unsheltered brothers and sisters on O'ahu can receive a decent living wage. The people who work for the Department of Human Services are already sacrificing an immense

amount of mental and emotional work, so it is vital the state provides the financial subsistence for them to do not just do their job satisfactorily, but truly change the lives of those who society looks down upon for not being the same socioeconomically. I humbly ask the committee to look at the people who the Department of Human Services work with and remind yourself that unsheltered people were once children too... with dreams and passions to live a worthy life. Let us do our part and fail them no more.