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DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
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Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 308

In consideration of
H.B. 1428 HD1
RELATING TO HOUSING.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 1428 HD1, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to allocate to housing counseling agencies certified by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide housing counseling services. It also requires a report to the Legislature regarding services provided by the housing counseling agencies. HHFDC supports the measure so long as it does not adversely impact priorities identified in the Executive Budget Request for FY 2026.

Housing counseling services empower residents with the knowledge and resources to secure and maintain affordable housing, which reduces the risk of eviction, foreclosure, and homelessness. The more vulnerable ALICE households would especially benefit.

In 1993, HUD started to approve nonprofit housing counseling agencies statewide. These include the Hawaii Home Ownership Center and Hawaiian Community Assets. We note that local banks and real estate agents have also implemented homebuyer education programs to assist with the dissemination of information for interested individuals.

HHFDC is restarting its mortgage loan and downpayment assistance programs, which require the successful completion of HUD-certified counseling services. HHFDC appreciates the appropriation to allocate to HUD-certified counseling agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

**Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
91-1270 Kinoaiki St., Bldg. 1
Kapolei, HI 96707**

Hawai'i State House of Representatives Committee on Finance

HB833 – Relating to Housing

RE: Strong support of HB1428

February 25, 2025

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) writes in **strong support of HB1428**, which seeks to invest in housing counseling agencies. As a HUD-certified housing counseling agency, CNHA sees the everyday need for increased financial education among Hawai'i renters and homebuyers to improve their budgeting, credit management, financial health, and home readiness.

As a Native Hawaiian organization, we deeply understand the importance of land, particularly when there is an ancestral or familial connection to it. For decades, we have seen more and more local families priced out of their generational homes, and the fallout from the wildfires has only exacerbated the situation. As a result, Native Hawaiians are increasingly forced to seek affordable housing out of state, leading to more Native Hawaiians residing outside of Hawai'i than within. This displacement threatens the survival of our Hawaiian culture and prevents future generations from building a future on their ancestral lands.

HUD-certified housing counseling services are a proven, cost-effective strategy to ensure financial stability and housing security. As a housing counseling agency, we provide financial education, homebuyer and renter workshops, and one-on-one housing counseling. Coupled with more wraparound services, housing counseling is critical in ensuring that affordable housing units remain occupied, stable, and sustainable. Without proper financial education, many households struggle to meet lease or mortgage obligations, leading to increased evictions, foreclosures, and homelessness.

Investing in financial literacy through HUD-certified housing counseling agencies will help residents and Native Hawaiian families have the opportunity to build a future in Hawai'i. For these reasons, we humbly ask that you **PASS 1428**.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Madelyn McKeague
Director of Advocacy, CNHA