



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:
H.B. NO. 464, RELATING TO HOUSING.

BEFORE THE:
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

DATE: Friday, January 31, 2025 **TIME:** 9:15 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 430

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Christopher T. Han, or Christopher J.I. Leong, Deputy Attorneys
General

Chair Evslin and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

The purpose of this bill is to improve tenants' ability to secure adequate housing by amending notice requirements for landlords to notify a tenant of any intent to raise the rent for any subsequent rental agreement or any intent to terminate a rental agreement.

The amendments to section 521-71, Hawaii Revised Statutes, in section 3 of the bill (page 5, line 7, to page 8, line 18) modify the termination notice requirements for landlords. These changes could be subject to challenge under the Contract Clause of the United States Constitution, which generally prohibits the substantial impairment of contractual relationships. Because residential leases are contracts by nature, any new requirements that conflict with existing agreements at the time of this bill's enactment could be considered an impairment.

To mitigate this issue, we recommend amending section 5 (page 9, lines 1-5) as follows:

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025; provided that section 2 and section 3 of this Act shall apply to all rental agreements entered into on or after the effective date of this Act and all rental agreement renewals entered into on or after the effective date of this Act.

This amendment would enhance the bill's ability to withstand constitutional challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 9:14:05 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maui Housing Hui	Maui Housing Hui	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

We are in support of this measure.

January 31, 2025

The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair

House Committee on Housing
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 464, Relating to Housing

HEARING: Friday, January 31, 2025, at 9:15 a.m.

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of Committee:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawaii and its over 10,000 members. HAR provides **comments** on House Bill 464, which requires, for tenancies greater than 90 days, a landlord to notify a tenant of any intent to raise the rent for any subsequent rental agreement or any intent to terminate a rental agreement 60 days before the expiration of the original rental agreement. Requires 90 day's notice for a landlord or tenant to terminate tenancies of three years or more and 60 days' notice to terminate tenancies of less than three years, with certain exceptions. Increases the amount of notice required to terminate tenancies that are less than month-to-month.

Under this measure, for tenancies greater than 90 days housing providers must provide 60 days' notice before raising rents or terminating a rental agreement. It also proposes changing the notice requirements for tenancies to:

1. Greater than 3 years – 90-day notice by the housing provider or tenant
2. Less than 3 years – 60-day notice
3. Less than 1 month – 15-day notice

HAR notes that rental agreements are negotiable between housing providers and tenants. The unpredictable nature of external factors, such as inflation, escalating maintenance fees, and increasing insurance costs, can swiftly impact these agreements and are often hard to anticipate and prepare for in advance.

Additionally, housing providers may need to terminate tenancies due to personal circumstances such as the need to sell the home due to financial difficulties, divorce, the need for personal use, or to assist a family member. Additionally, tenants may need to move for financial or personal difficulties as well, including needing to move for work or their service in the military. Therefore, the added notice requirement to terminate the tenancy could also create challenges for both housing providers and tenants.

As such, HAR believes that the existing notice requirements strikes a balance. It provides both housing providers and tenants with sufficient notice while considering the



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multitude of unpredictable factors that they may encounter, ensuring a fair and flexible approach for both parties.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.





HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Support for HB 464 – Relating to Housing

House Committee on Housing

Friday, January 31, 2025 at 9:15AM Conf. Rm. 430 and via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the committee;

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 464**, which would strengthen notice requirements prior to end of rental agreements for rental terminations and rent increases in Hawaii.

This bill would require notification periods for rent increases of:

- 60 days written notice for any tenancy over 90 days

And would establish or increase notification for tenancy terminations to:

- 90 days' written notice for tenancies of 3 years or more
- 60 days' written notice for tenancies less than 3 years
- 15 days' written notice for tenancies less than month-to-month

This bill addresses a critical gap in Hawaii's landlord-tenant code that currently leaves many renters vulnerable to sudden displacement. Under existing law, landlords are required to provide minimal advance notice before declining to renew a fixed-term lease, even for tenants in good standing. This lack of protection creates significant housing instability for Hawaii's working families.

HB464 establishes critical guidelines for both landlords and tenants, ensuring transparency and fairness in rental agreements. Providing ample notice periods for rent increases and termination of rental agreements is essential for tenants to plan their housing arrangements and for landlords to manage their properties effectively.

In areas like Hawaii, where rental housing supply is constrained and demand is high, tenants often encounter difficulties securing alternative housing options within the standard notice periods. Without these protections, the 40% of households who rent their homes in Hawaii are vulnerable to sudden displacement.

Housing instability and displacement can cause significant financial and emotional hardship. When families are forced to move with little notice, it impacts their employment, their children's education, and their overall wellbeing. Research from the Urban Institute shows that housing instability is linked to negative health outcomes, lower academic achievement, and reduced earning potential.



HAWAII APPLESEED

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Hawaii's tight rental market makes sudden moves particularly burdensome. Residential vacancy rates are an indicator of how flexible a housing market is and the mobility options for residents, which determines how easy it would be to secure new housing. This rate is determined by the number of units that are *available in the rental or for-sale market*. Typically a "good" vacancy rate is considered to be between 5-8%.¹ Calculating residential vacancy rate using census bureau data, Hawaii has a *true* residential vacancy rate (excluding vacancies that are not available in the market such as seasonal, short term, or rented/sold but unoccupied units) of just 2.7%.² This implies securing new housing quickly in Hawaii is extremely challenging. The barrier is even worse for low income individuals, where the average wait for subsidized housing is nearly 2 years.³ Yet current law provides no minimum notice period for fixed-term lease non-renewals outside of month to month rentals.

The economic and emotional burden of sudden moves is severe. Beyond rent, tenants face substantial costs including:

- Security deposits (typically first months rent): \$3000⁴.
- Application fees: \$20-\$75 or any "cost of obtaining information about the applicant"⁵.
- Lost wages from taking time off to search for housing and move, which could take anywhere from 1-3 days to fully move and could cost \$120-\$360 for a minimum wage person.
- Replacement expenses due from loss of possessions associated with sudden moves and emotional expense of losing items which cannot be replaced.

Extending the notice requirements for rental increases and tenancy terminations can greatly assist asset-limited families in preparing for increased housing costs or finding alternative housing with ample time before the end of the lease agreement.

The proposed 60-90 day notice requirements align with best practices from other high-cost rental markets. Similar protections have proven effective in other jurisdictions such as Seattle and Portland. These cities have implemented "just cause" eviction protections that include longer notice requirements which has resulted in 15-20% reduction in displacement rates.

¹<https://www.nccor.org/tools-econindicators/healthy-economies/vacancy-rate-residential/#:~:text=The%20percentage%20of%20residential%20property,is%20between%205%E2%80%938%25.>

²https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2022.B25004?q=vacancy&q=040XX00US15_050XX00US15003.

³ <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-long-do-people-wait-for-subsidized-housing/state/hawaii/>

⁴ <https://www.zillow.com/rental-manager/market-trends/hi/> "Average Rent of All Property Types in Hawaii"

⁵ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2023/bills/GM1303_PDF "Act 200 (SLH2023)"



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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As Hawaii continues to face severe rental housing shortages, preventing displacement is critical in ensuring that households remain housed and their displacement doesn't cause further stress onto our tight rental market.

We urge the committee to pass HB 464 to help prevent unnecessary displacement and support housing security for Hawaii's asset limited, renting families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on HB464.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 2:08:27 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Kay	Hawaii Workers Center	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

This is a very important bill because 45 days is not enough for a person to make major adjustments in their life.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 464: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: House Committee on Housing

FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Friday, 1/31/+25; 9:15 AM; CR 430 & Videoconference

Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members, Committee on Housing:

Catholic Charities Hawaii **Supports HB 464**, which increases the notice periods required for lease non-renewals or rental increases. It requires 60 days notice for tenancies less than 3 years, and 90 days notice for tenancies of 3 years or more.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable of the people in Hawaii. We serve over 40,000 people each year throughout the state. Creating affordable housing and ending homelessness are our top priorities.

Catholic Charities Hawaii supports this bill since it would repair an important missing piece of the landlord-tenant code. Currently, landlords are not required to give ANY notice if they have a fixed term lease (e.g. 1 year lease) with a tenant. Tenants who intend to continue the lease are very shocked when it ends and they must leave! No notice or a very short notice can create homelessness. In a subsequent month-to-month lease, the proposed 60 day written notice from the landlord is also greatly needed for tenants to find housing.

Hawaii has a severe shortage of rental housing. Catholic Charities Hawaii has programs to help people find rentals. However, this is not a fast process. It requires much searching and help to locate and move to a new rental unit.

One of our state's top priorities is ending homelessness. **To accomplish that, we need more strategies to help prevent homelessness.** This bill is one more tool to prevent homelessness and provide some hope to families facing a move.

Catholic Charities Hawaii urges **your support** of this bill.

If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813.



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of
Hawaii'i

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January 29, 2025

**Executive Board
Committee**

Rev. Sam Domingo
Board Chair

Mary Ochs
Vice Chair

Dr. Arcelita Imasa
Secretary

Kami Yamamoto
Treasurer

Board Members

Yoko Liriano

Nanea Lo

Innocenta
Sound-Kikku

Ray Catania

Justin Jansen

Leyton Torda

Kami Yamamoto

CJ Johnson

Hawaii State House of Representatives

Committee on Housing

Rep. Luke Evslin, Chair

Rep. Tyson Miyake, Vice Chair

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for H.B. 464 RELATING TO INCREASED NOTICE PERIODS

Dear Chair Rep. Evslin, Vice-Chair Rep. Miyake, and Members of the Committee on Housing:

The Hawaii Workers Center (HWC) envisions a Hawaii in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being.

It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's workers.

The HWC stands in **strong support of H.B. 464** which increases the notice periods required for lease non-renewals or rent increases. Requires 60 days notice for tenancies less than 3 years, and 90 days notice for tenancies of 3 years or more.

This bill is driven by the members of the Maui Tenants & Workers Association, a project of the Hawaii Workers Center to help ameliorate the housing crisis on Maui and the unlevel playing field that renters face in a housing market with very limited supply. Tenants can currently lose their housing with just 45 days notice. In our current housing market where demand far outweighs supply, this simply isn't enough time to find adequate housing

Thank you for your consideration in support of H.B. 464.

Executive Director

Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla
Executive Director

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:25:37 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT this Bill which reasonably supports the interests of tenants. I urge all members of the Committee to **VOTE YES** on this Bill.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:59:39 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With aloha,

I SUPPORT this bill which requires, for tenancies greater than 90 days, a landlord to notify a tenant of any intent to raise the rent for any subsequent rental agreement or any intent to terminate a rental agreement 60 days before the expiration of the original rental agreement. Requires 90 day's notice for a landlord or tenant to terminate tenancies of three years or more and 60 days' notice to terminate tenancies of less than three years, with certain exceptions. Increases the amount of notice required to terminate tenancies that are less than month-to-month.

As someone who currently rents and has rented in Hawaii for over 15 years, these additions to the law will be very helpful to tenants and I believe landlords too. It is becoming harder and harder to find places to rent and knowing ahead of time that the rent will raise is important. We found this out last year, our landlord increased our rent to a point that it would have been a challenge to pay more. As they let us know in advance, we were able to start a search early and were able to move to a place where the rent was more in line with our income. This also gave the landlord time to fix and prepare the apartment for the next tenant.

Again, I support this bill.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:40:16 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Mines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB464. Tenants can currently lose their housing with just 45 days notice. From personal experience, I know that this simply isn't enough time to find adequate housing in the current housing market. When I was notified that my lease would not be renewed in January of 2024, it took me 6 months to find clean and safe housing. Thank goodness I had friends to live with - not everyone is so lucky. Even with 6 months of time, the housing I had to settle for ended up having a rent cost that was 2.3x higher than my prior rent. Even 6 months wasn't enough time in this housing market to find something clean, safe and AFFORDABLE.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 6:21:47 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tamra Hayden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this billed for sealed records. This will prevent unfair practices or discrimination based on a tenants previous records.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:57:06 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Momi Vee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please Support HB 464,It increases the notice periods required for lease non-renewals or rent increases. Requires the 60 days notice for tenancies less than 3 years, and 90 days notice for tenancies of 3 years or more. **Why is this important?** Tenants can currently lose their home with just 45 days notice. In our current housing market, this simply isn't enough time to find adequate housing. With so many people vying for the same home, it's almost impossible to continue living here in Maui.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:44:13 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeremiah Brown	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

A colleague of mine's lease was abruptly non-renewed with 45 days' notice. As a result, he had to miss work for several days while he and his family scrambled to find a new place to live. During that time, he lost income and was incredibly stressed. He was forced to uproot his entire family on short notice and take the first apartment that was available.

This bill would address this issue and I strongly support it's passage. It would lead to more stable housing for renters in our state.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:55:55 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I **strongly support HB 464**, which seeks to provide tenants with more time to secure stable housing before facing displacement. As a Kanaka Maoli and a lineal descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom, a member of the Honolulu Tenants Union, an Executive Commission Member of the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i, and a board member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center, I am deeply concerned about the challenges tenants face in Hawaii’s volatile housing market.

Currently, tenants can lose their housing with just 45 days’ notice. In our "state"'s severe housing crisis, where rents are skyrocketing and the availability of affordable housing is scarce, this simply isn’t enough time for individuals and families to secure a new place to live. Too often, tenants are forced into precarious living situations, experiencing housing instability or even homelessness due to such short notice.

Extending the notice period would provide tenants with the time they need to find adequate and affordable housing without being forced into crisis. This is a basic protection that aligns with our shared values of community stability and housing as a fundamental human right.

I urge you to pass HB 464 to support tenants and prevent unnecessary displacement in our communities.

Me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo

Mō‘ili‘ili, HI 96826

Member, Honolulu Tenants Union

Executive Commission Member, Sierra Club of Hawai‘i

Board Member, Hawai‘i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli / Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 2:59:58 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stoph Kasak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In my 17 years of tenancy since seeking economic refuge on Maui, I've had to live in 13 different places (when I even could line up rehousing on short unexpected notice at the hands of my var. landed lords' greed driven whims), and know all too well the trauma cost & impact of living under the heel of Hawaii's onerously savage "month to month" notice periods, which completely upend & devastate working folks' lives here with ever increasing regularity & severity, as the monstrous housing market spirals ever further into barbarity.

Extending the meat-grinding gear turning period length is the smallest measure that could afford struggling tenants the barest minimum of potentially hugely impactful relief, while inflicting the least of restraints upon the parasitic landed owner class ability to wantonly destroy our vulnerable tenants' lives at their insatiable profit lust's capricious, wanton merest whims.

~*\$toph Kasak

Maui Tenants & Workers Association board member

formerly Occupant with Occupy Wall Street- Maui's Occupy Our Homes Working Group

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 7:31:13 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
carol lee kamekona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support hb464 as I am an indirect casualty of FEMA'S High rent payments to landlords. My landlord's grandchild wanted a bigger place to raise her daughter because they were living in a 3bdrm cottage with her brother and his girlfriend. Nothing affordable was out there for them so they told grama they wanted to move into the front house which I occupied. Took me 6 months to find someplace my son and I could barely afford. We are struggling. So I am in support of a longer period of time to provide tenants the ability to find adequate housing. I lived in my house for 15 years.

again I support hb464. Mahalo!

carol lee kamekona

kahului, maui

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 8:09:01 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christina Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, I support HB464 because it takes a long time to secure new housing on island after housing has been taken away. For instance, right now my lease has turned month-to-month. I have not heard from my landlords about a lease renewal. I have contacted them and have not heard back for a week. The anxiety from this is very difficult to sit in because I know if I lose my home of 5 years, it will be very difficult to find something comparable. If I can't find something that fits my needs, that may cause me to consider leaving the island entirely. It is not a normal position to be in, to either continue a lease or move entirely off island. This is why it is important for renters to have more time to find a new home. Thank you for considering this bill, it will greatly help renters of Maui by providing some ease during a stressful transition.

In appreciation,

Christina Jones

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB464

Aloha Committee Members,

I am Barbara Tom testifying as a private citizen and as the Director of an Immigrant/Migrant Center in Waipahu. I am in full support of HB464 which states “for tenancies greater than 90 days, a landlord to notify a tenant of any intent to raise the rent for any subsequent rental agreement or any intent to terminate a rental agreement 60 days before the expiration of the original rental agreement. Requires 90 days’ notice for a landlord or tenant to terminate tenancies of three years or more and 60 days’ notice to terminate tenancies of less than three years, with certain exceptions. Increases the amount of notice required to terminate tenancies that are less than month-to-month. “

In today’s rental market, tenants have a difficult time seeking suitable housing and 45 days is not enough time for them to search and secure housing for their families. Many of our immigrant and migrant families that seek help for housing are faced with language barriers and are technologically challenged. They do not have internet, nor do they know how to use the computer for their search. Extending the notification to 90 day and 60 days will provide additional time for families to seek adequate help to locate housing. Additionally allowing 60 days’ notice for any increase in rent once the rental agreement expires allows the families to seek ways to provide additional funding for their rent.

I am in full support of HB464

Sincerely,
Barbara Tom
98-1854 Mikinolia Place
Aiea, HI 96797

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:07:01 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Hocker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake and members of the housing committee,

My name is Jordan Hocker and I began volunteering as a tenants organizer on Maui in late 2021, motivated by the housing crisis caused by Covid and watching many of my friends and co workers struggle to find affordable and safe living conditions. I am a renter and currently act as the Outreach and Education Coordinator with the Maui Housing Hui, a grassroots organization aimed at promoting equity for renters. This testimony is on my own behalf.

The effects of the August 8th wildfires were devastating to our community and delivered a secondary blow to renters not directly effected by the fires. Due to the reduction of inventory and inflated rental prices due to FEMA's Direct Lease program, it is nearly impossible for many to find affordable housing within the timeframe of 45 days, likely a contributor to our increase in homelessness.

We cannot simply build our way out of certain aspects of this housing emergency when it comes to renters. What happened on Maui was a nexus of poor land management, high winds, and drought. The truth is that the conditions are ripe for something like this to happen anywhere in the state and the renter will be increasingly vulnerable to the mechanisms of the market like the immediate increase in prices post-disaster, which are often a catalyst for renter displacement. In the case of a sharp reduction of inventory and in the current market where we have a deficit of affordable units needed, it is logical to allow more time for those living largely at 70% AMI and below to make a housing transition once given a notice to vacate.

I am asking you to pass HB464 through your committee, so that it can move forward as a potential alleviation to the increasingly unrealistic timeline of 45 days to relocate once given a notice to vacate.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Jordan Hocker

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:07:30 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aria Juliet Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Evslin and Vice Chair Miyake and the Committee

Please support HB 464, increasing the notice time landlords must give to tenants to raise rent or terminate their lease. As viable safe options in the current housing market are very slim, and very competitive, it's very difficult to secure.

I've personally been in a very difficult situation having been notified I had to move in the middle of two planned work trips leaving me to scramble to find a safe living situation, a new security deposit, and move all of my things in 3 weeks.

This bill will help allow more time for folks to locate proper housing.

Mahalo

Aria Juliet Castillo, Kailua HI

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 9:13:39 AM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Weitz	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Last year, I needed to find a new place to live. In my time here I sustained sexual harassment by one landlord. Shortly after, in another house that landlord's partner then followed me and convinced a roommate that I was suing him for money, so while the lawsuit was being investigated I did not have a home where I knew I was safe to openly cope with what I was enduring. Then in that same house, we learned there were severe mold issues behind the walls, which was making everyone sick in ways that weren't obvious at the time, but now being out of the house it was. I now have developed mold sensitivity and it is difficult to find a place to live here that doesn't have mold, that I can also afford on my PhD student income. When it came time to find a new house last year, due to this series of difficult experiences, I was at my breaking point. I realized that I hadn't felt safe at home in years, and without that basic foundation I couldn't hope to thrive - I was falling apart. So my priority was to find a safe and secure house, physically and psychologically. This proved extremely difficult to find in the housing market. I was fortunate to have a friends with extra bedrooms that I could stay in temporarily, and I was moving from friend to friend for 2 months. During this time, finding a place to live became my full time job. I was only able to do this because I had the support of friends, and because I was on summer break from school. Most people could never take the amount of time off work needed if they were in an equivalent situation and support themselves. I was able to, and it was still extremely difficult. I am thankful to be in a safe home now, and it means the world to me, but the threat of not finding one was extremely real. After 2 months, I felt like it wouldn't be possible, and I was seriously considering giving up and leaving. I love this place and life I have here, and I never want to be in that position again. Yet we know, people are in this position every day, and they do move, because they don't have all the graces I was fortunate to have throughout this tortuous experience. Tenants need more grace.

The account of my friend's story that I used to testify for HB 463 is relevant here as well, and I'll paste that again:

Unstable housing is a significant threat to mental health. I have experienced this personally (not eviction related) over the past years living here, and it has made it very difficult to succeed in higher functions, such as doing my job. However, I have an experience from a former housemate to relate. She lived in a monster house due to the difficulty finding an affordable place to live close to work. Over time she realized the landlord was abusing their power in a lot of ways. One day, a tenant got into a debate with the landlord, and the landlord physically assaulted the tenant. My friend got a video of this, and called the police. The landlord then filed an eviction notice. My friend had difficulty finding a new place, but she did through personal relationships because

at that point she wasn't appealing on applications. She moved into my house. Our landlord was sexually harassing us and invading our privacy. When I asked him to stop, he made the environment inhospitable. The state civil rights commission settled a case against him on my behalf due to this. Two of us chose to give our 30 day notice immediately due to his treatment, however our other friend who already had an eviction notice on her record and would have difficulty finding another place, wanted to stay. Within 15 minutes of our move-out notice, she received an eviction. This was clearly a retaliatory eviction, and she did go to court with him over this. She and the landlord ended up dropping the charges against each other over time, but just having this additional record on file made it even harder for her to find a place. I have witnessed firsthand how landlords abuse their power in how they wield evictions when they are actually in the wrong, and this throws tenants lives into chaos, making it difficult to perform even the most basic functions. Tenants at minimum need more time to cope with these life altering events when they happen.

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:37:24 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Ho	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I have witnessed the stress placed on families and individuals who are given the current short notice (45 days) before the termination of their rental housing. In our current housing market, with such a short supply of affordable housing, this simply isn't enough time to find adequate housing. Even applications to programs like IHS-sponsored and Family Promise require a time-consuming process of verification of qualifications and need, for which 45 days is not adequate.

I strongly advocate for the extension of the notification period, from 45 to 60 days. Failure to extend the notification period will likely result in more homeless families and individuals.

Mahalo,

Cheryl Ho, Nu'uaniu

HB-464

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 3:07:16 PM

Testimony for HSG on 1/31/2025 9:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
H. Doug Matsuoka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the Committee,

My name is H. Doug Matsuoka, I am 72 years old, a director of Kokua Council, and a founding member of Hawaii Guerrilla Video Hui. I am retired, living on a fixed income, and I am a renter.

I strongly support HB 464 increasing the notice required for rent increases and termination of tenancy. These measures are especially needed to protect Hawaii's people against outside commercial real estate investment in residential property. Changes in rent have become more extreme and without regard to the renter's age or financial situation.

Traditionally in Hawaii, a renter would typically live in the landlord's former dwelling. The renter would mail the rent check to a local address or even deliver it directly to the landlady's house, like I do. Today, the owner of the property is as likely to be part of an investment scheme from outside Hawaii and be motivated entirely by quick financial gain using the most aggressive method possible.

Similar and even stricter measures are used in other places, including Germany which has a higher rental rate than Hawaii. (Germany has a homeownership rate of 41% vs the US average of 69%.) Rental contracts typically have no term at all and are continuing. Yet homeowners and home renters are both happy with their living situation. They have a high proportion of small, private property owners like Hawaii in the good old days.

I think there is general agreement that housing is a fundamental human need, something necessary for well-being. Chapter 4 of the OECD (Office of Economic Cooperation and Development, an international group of which the US is a founding member) publication, "How's Life?", shows how housing conditions matter for well-being

The provisions in HB 464 will help public well-being. The benefit will not be at the expense of Hawaii's private home owners but will be borne by the institutional ones.

Please pass HB 464. Thank you for your attention to this.

H. Doug Matsuoka

Brookings Institute: Home ownership in various countries:

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/germany-rental-housing-markets/#:~:text=Germany%3A%20A%20nation%20of%20renters,housing%20in%20the%20postwar%20period>

OECD publication, “How’s Life? Measuring Well-Being,”

https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2011/10/how-s-life_g1g14dc9/9789264121164-en.pdf#page1