

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

March 28, 2025 at 10:02 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

In consideration of
H.B. 431 HD2 SD1
RELATING TO HOUSING.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 431 HD2 SD1, which appropriates funds to the Office of the Governor for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative and Ohana Zones Pilot Program. It also appropriates funds to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) for the development of supportive housing projects and provision of supportive services for certain households in the supportive housing projects. HHFDC supports the measure so long as it does not adversely impact priorities identified in the Executive Budget Request for FY 2026.

HHFDC recognizes the need for a dedicated funding source to assist individuals with special needs. The appropriation will allow us to develop, operate, and maintain affordable, supportive housing projects and provide supportive services for households with special needs who reside in such projects.

We request \$175,000 for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) housing finance specialist I position to help administer the provisions in Section 5 of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
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

March 27, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 431 HD2 SD1 – RELATING TO HOUSING.**

Hearing: March 28, 2025, 10:02 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports this measure, which invests in the Kauhale initiative, the Ohana Zones Pilot program, and permanent supportive housing as strategies to reduce homelessness. DHS defers to the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) and the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC). DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation align with the executive budget and not reduce or replace other budget priorities.

PURPOSE: The bill appropriates funds to the Office of the Governor for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative and Ohana Zones Pilot Program. Appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation for the development of supportive housing projects and provision of supportive services for certain households in the supportive housing projects. Effective 6/29/3000. (SD1)

The House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness amended the measure by:

(1) Changing the appropriations to unspecified amounts;

- (2) Deleting language that attempted to prevent the proper lapse of a general fund appropriation at the end of the fiscal biennium for which the appropriation was made;
- (3) Deleting language that would have established the Kauhale Initiative Special Fund;
- (4) Inserting language that appropriates an unspecified amount to assist the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions in implementing the Kauhale Initiative;
- (5) Changing the effective dates to June 29, 3000, and July 1, 3000, respectively, to encourage further discussion; and
- (6) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Housing further amended the measure by:

- (1) Expanding the authorized uses of funds appropriated for the Kauhale Initiative;
- (2) Authorizing funds appropriated for the Kauhale Initiative to be used for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program established under Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018;
- (3) Requiring at least two bidders for any Kauhale project estimated to be over \$1,000,000 if appropriated funds are used to contract for the procurement of building services and projects related to the Kauhale Initiative;
- (4) Deleting the unspecified appropriation to the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to implement the Kauhale Initiative; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committees on Health and Human Services and housing substantially amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have allowed funds appropriated for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative to be used for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program established under Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018;
- (2) Deleting language that would have allowed:
 - (A) The Governor to transfer all or a portion of the appropriations for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative to the Governor's designated executive branch departments or agencies, including the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions, for expenditures incurred to implement the Kauhale Initiative; and
 - (B) The Governor's designated executive branch departments or agencies to expend the transferred appropriations for the performance of their duties under the Kauhale Initiative;
- (3) Deleting language that would have provided that if funds appropriated for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative are used to contract for the

- procurement of building services and projects related to the Kauhale Initiative, there shall be at least two bidders for any kauhale project estimated to be over \$1,000,000;
- (4) Inserting a blank appropriation amount for the continued implementation of the Ohana Zones Pilot Program established under Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2018;
 - (5) Deleting language that would have established a Supportive Housing Special Fund to be administered by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation;
 - (6) Deleting language that would have made appropriations into and out of the Supportive Housing Special Fund;
 - (7) Inserting a blank appropriation amount to be expended by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation for the development, operation, and maintenance of affordable, supportive housing projects and the provision of supportive services for households with special needs who reside in the supportive housing projects;
 - (8) Amending the legislative findings of part III to reflect its amended purpose;
 - (9) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose; and
 - (10) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
March 28, 2025

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Dela Cruz, and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB431 HD2 Relating to Housing

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB431 HD2 SD1**, appropriates funds to the Office of the Governor for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative and Ohana Zones Pilot Program. Appropriates funds to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation for the development of supportive housing projects and provision of supportive services for certain households in the supportive housing projects. Effective 6/29/3000.

This bill represents a critical step forward in meeting the housing needs of Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations, including individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Hawai'i's I/DD population often faces significant barriers to accessing safe, stable, and affordable housing. Individuals with I/DD are more likely to experience unemployment, limited income, and social isolation, making it exceedingly difficult to secure independent housing. HB431 HD2 SD1 provides a pathway to addressing these systemic challenges by ensuring that housing is affordable and integrated with services necessary for residents to thrive.

Supportive services funded under this bill, such as case management, life skills training, and assistance with daily living activities, are vital for individuals with I/DD to live independently and participate fully in their communities. The promotion of mixed-income rental housing developments, as outlined in HB431 HD2 SD1, fosters inclusive environments where individuals with I/DD can live alongside diverse populations. This approach reduces stigma and encourages greater community understanding and acceptance of individuals with disabilities.

HB431 HD2 SD1 Relating to Housing

March 28, 2025

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By addressing housing insecurity and ensuring access to integrated support services, HB431 will enable individuals with I/DD to live more independently and with dignity, reduce reliance on costly institutional care or emergency services, and improve overall health, social inclusion, and quality of life for individuals with I/DD.

The DD Council believes that the passage of HB431 HD2 will have transformative impacts on Hawai'i's I/DD community, providing them with the stability and support they need to lead fulfilling and independent lives. We urge you to pass this bill to ensure that the needs of individuals with I/DD and other vulnerable populations are prioritized in Hawai'i's housing solutions. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB431 HD2 SD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Friday, March 28, 2025

10:02 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211, and Videoconference

In Support

H.B. No. 431, HD2, SD1, Relating to Housing

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor supports H.B. No. 431, HD2, SD1, Relating to Housing. This bill appropriates funds to the Office of the Governor for the continued implementation of the Kauhale Initiative and Ohana Zones Pilot Program. The bill would also provide funds to the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation for the development of supportive services for certain households in the supportive housing projects.

Governor Green and his Administration have adopted the approach that, "housing is healthcare" and has set out with the goal of housing and sheltering half of our unsheltered homeless population by the end of 2026.

Through the Kauhale Initiative, the Governor is taking an innovative and unique approach when it comes to tackling Hawaii's homelessness throughout the state. Kauhale are communal villages of tiny homes for the homeless, with shared space for cooking, eating, recreation, growing food, and community activities. Studies have shown that by providing housing for chronically homeless individuals will not only improve overall health outcomes but will also help to save taxpayers millions of dollars in health care costs.

We are very grateful for the previous support of the Legislature appropriating \$33 million for kauhale for Fiscal Year 2025 and we respectfully ask for your favorable consideration once again to fund this program. Governor Green's Executive Biennium Budget requested \$50 million each year for Fiscal Years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027. This potential funding will help to continue to allow the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to continue its important work and will also help to achieve the Governor's goal of establishing 30 kauhale villages across the state by the end of 2026, building upon the current number of 18 currently established.

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



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 431 HD2 SD1: RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Friday, 3/28/25, 10:02 AM; Room 211 & Videoconference**

Chair Dela Druz, Chair Moriwaki, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports HB 431 HD2 SD1**, which appropriates funds for the Kauhale Initiative and Ohana Zone Pilot Program, and funding to the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) for the development, operation, and maintenance of affordable supportive housing projects and supportive services for the special need resident. (SD1 deleted the Supportive Housing Special Fund.)

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), a community-based organization, has provided social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years, assisting 40,000 people annually. Our services target the most vulnerable in Hawai'i, including elders, veterans, children, families, houseless individuals, and immigrants. We have a long history of addressing affordable housing and homelessness.

These initiatives are crucial to address Hawai'i's homelessness crisis. On Oahu, 62% of homeless persons are unsheltered. The **Kauhale Initiative** accelerates the development of diverse housing options, helping people move off the streets into much-needed transitional and bridge housing. Funding **Ohana Zone** projects keeps formerly homeless individuals in housing. However, deeply affordable permanent housing remains KEY to truly ending homelessness.

The development of ongoing **Supportive Housing** is particularly vital. This bill provides a transparent structured financial mechanism to integrate development, operations, and supportive services—ensuring that vulnerable populations receive not just shelter, but the assistance needed for long-term stability. By centralizing funding and coordination under the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), this initiative streamlines coordination, benefiting developers, service providers, and, most importantly, individuals in need.

We urge the legislature to add the language for a Supportive Housing Special Fund, which was deleted in this SD1. The special need residents in these homes require ongoing services to successfully live in the community. This Special Fund would create a process the ongoing funding, which is critical for developers to ensure long-term stability. We must prioritize chronically homeless individuals and those with special housing needs—veterans, individuals with addictions, aging-out foster youth, domestic violence survivors, developmentally disabled persons, and frail elders. Without supportive housing and supportive services, many face institutionalization, costly emergency interventions, or even premature death.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i urges your support for this bill. The Kauhale, Ohana Zones and Supportive Housing Initiatives are essential to tackling homelessness. Please approve significant funding to bring stability and hope to those who need ongoing supportive services. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at (808) 527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813 •



TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee

FROM: Micah A. Kāne, CEO & President

RE: Testimony in Support for HB 431 HD2 SD1, Relating to Housing

DATE: Friday, March 28, 2025 at 10:02am

PLACE: Conference Room 211

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) supports HB 431 HD 2 SD1 (HB 431), which continues to fund and support the Kauhale Initiative to provide creative solutions to combat homelessness. In addition, the bill bolsters the state's efforts to create safe supportive housing options for the community.

HCF's CHANGE Framework identifies six essential sectors for commitment to create a better Hawai'i. The goals of HB 431 fit within both the "C" sector for Community-Centered Economy and "H" sector for Health and Wellness.

Hawai'i faces one of the highest homelessness levels of any state, currently experiencing a rate of more than 40 houseless residents per 10,000 individuals. The high cost of living, relative low wages, and limited housing supply create a challenging environment that push many individuals and families to make difficult choices about how to spend their limited resources. Just one financial setback can be the difference between skipping a meal, forgoing desperately needed medicine, or missing a rental payment. For anyone that loses the security of their own home, it is imperative to find a new, stable shelter as quickly as possible.

The Kauhale Initiative is just the type of solution that Hawai'i needs. It promotes cost-effective shared spaces that allow residents to take ownership and responsibility for the physical place and each other. By expanding this program, the state can provide a greater safety net for the most vulnerable population. Furthermore, the supportive housing programs facilitate care and treatment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, those dealing with mental health illnesses, others battling substance abuse, and more. These services are critical to facilitate healing and stability.



hawaiicommunityfoundation.org

827 Fort Street Mall Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

MAIN 808-537-6333 FAX 808-521-6286

HCF supports the Kauhale Initiative because it has already demonstrated success. By appropriating additional funds, the state can continue its efforts to reduce homelessness and demonstrate the care and compassion that is appropriate when assisting people that are facing these tremendous challenges.

Thank you for considering HCF's testimony in support of HB 431. Homelessness is a critical issue for all of Hawai'i and the potential benefits of these sensible programs will be felt far and wide.



March 26, 2025

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senators Henry J.C. Aquino, Lynn DeCoite, Brandon J.C. Elefante, Troy N. Hashimoto, Lorraine R. Inouye, Dru Mamo Kanuha, Michelle N. Kidani, Donna Mercado Kim, Chris Lee, Glenn Wakai, and Kurt Fevella, Committee Members

RE: HB 431 RELATING TO HOUSING – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I am submitting this letter in support of HB 431 on behalf of Easterseals Hawaii. Easterseals Hawaii served 2,025 Hawaii community members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in 2024. Our purpose is to create a more equitable world where people with I/DD can choose their own path.

HB 431 funds supportive housing for individuals with disabilities. Hawaii has one of the highest homelessness rates in the nation,¹ and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected by homelessness.² It is therefore critical to address the growing need for housing support in Hawaii, especially for individuals with disabilities who need supportive services along with affordable housing. This bill will do so by funding the Kauhale initiative and creating a supportive housing special fund.

Easterseals Hawaii supports HB 431 and respectfully requests your “aye” vote.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this letter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Liebert Lewis".

Rachel Liebert Lewis
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
Easterseals Hawaii
PublicPolicyAndAdvocacy@eshawaii.org

¹ <https://usafacts.org/articles/which-states-have-the-highest-and-lowest-rates-of-homelessness/>

² <https://www.naccho.org/blog/articles/homelessness-among-individuals-with-disabilities-influential-factors-and-scalable-solutions>



HB431 HD2 SD1 Kauhale

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Friday March 28, 2025 10:02 Room 211 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB431 HD2 SD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

HSAC respectfully advocates for funding supportive services.

HSAC recognizes that **supportive housing with specialized funding** for services to help individuals with **disabilities, substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance abuse), severe mental health, justice-involved reentry, and more are needed**

1. As a means for people to **become functional while striving for self-sufficiency.**
2. Having a means for transitioning residents to functionality through **behavioral health services leads to permanent housing** and
3. Is a key **cost-effective strategy to not over utilize Kauhale building projects.**

Residential and Outpatient Substance Use Disorder funding has been reduced at a time when studies indicate that housed homeless will need these critical services.

HSAC notes that formal treatment, such as residential and outpatient will be critically needed for Kauhale residents to achieve functionality and recovery.

Studies show that once housed, feeling safe and stable, many homeless voluntarily seek substance abuse treatment because they want improved functionality.

- **For example, 50-60% of individuals in Housing First programs engaged in substance use disorders treatment** when supportive services were offered. Programs offering integrated care (housing, food, medical care, and counseling) report higher engagement in substance abuse treatment, with rates often exceeding 50% in some cases.

- **After safe housing, homeless still are at elevated risk for experiencing substance use disorders (SUDs), mental disorders, trauma,** medical conditions, employment challenges, and incarceration. Both treatment and housing needs must be concurrently addressed.¹
- Substance use, mental health, medical care, and social supports services are critical for mitigating risks of SUDs and mental disorders and improving health outcomes.
- Programs using the “Housing First” model prioritize stable housing without requiring sobriety or participation in substance abuse treatment as a condition for housing. Once stabilized, motivational interviewing and harm-reduction strategies can encourage more people to pursue treatment.
- Many homeless individuals with substance use disorders also struggle with mental health conditions. Addressing these conditions alongside addiction increases the likelihood of seeking and remaining in treatment.

Residential and intensive outpatient treatment is vital for individuals who need intensive, round-the-clock care, particularly when addiction is severe or compounded by complex personal, social, or psychological challenges. It provides the stability and resources needed to build a strong foundation for lasting recovery.

Providing stable housing and basic necessities significantly increases the likelihood that individuals will consider and engage in substance abuse treatment. **Hawaii needs to be prepared for large numbers of Kauhale residents asking for treatment just at the time when capacity is insufficient to meet this need.**

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for questions.

¹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2021). Behavioral Health Services for People Who Are Homeless. Advisory. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep20-06-04-003.pdf](https://library.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep20-06-04-003.pdf)



Young Democrats of Hawai'i

Executive Board: **March 25, 2025**

Cori Terayama
President

RE: **Testimony in Support of HB431 HD2 SD1, Relating to Housing**
Hearing Date: Friday, March 28, 2025 at 10:02 AM
Conference Room: 211

Cameron Deptula
Vice-President

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

Jimmy Nguyen
Secretary

The Young Democrats of Hawai'i (YDHI) **SUPPORTS HB431 HD2 SD1, RELATING TO HOUSING.**

Isaiah Baclaan
Treasurer

HB431 HD2 SD1 would appropriate funds for the continued operation of the Kauhale Initiative and authorizes those funds to be used for the Ohana Zones Pilot Program and would also establish and appropriate funds into and out of the Supportive Housing Special Fund.

Cindy Ing
Young Democrats of America National Committeewoman

YDHI supports this bill because young adults, particularly those who are aging out of foster care or facing financial struggles, would benefit immensely from deeply affordable and permanent housing. As the cost of living continues to rise while wages fail to keep pace, young adults are at serious risk of homelessness.

Maria Glodilet Rallojay
Membership and Events Director

The Kauhale Initiative is more than just another affordable housing option—it has the potential to foster a supportive, intergenerational community where residents can share resources, learn from one another, and develop a strong sense of belonging. Stable housing provides young adults with the foundation they need to pursue education, secure employment, and build pathways to long-term success. Without deeply affordable housing, many will continue to struggle in a cycle of poverty and housing instability. Investing in the Kauhale Initiative is an investment in the future, ensuring that young adults have the opportunity to achieve independence and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

Dave Nagaji
Campaign Director

Jennifer Tse
Policy and Research Director

YDHI is an organization whose mission is to increase the political strength of young democrats between 18 and 35 years old by providing opportunities for civic engagement, political advocacy, and participation in the Democratic Party of Hawai'i. YDHI consists of over 1,600 members.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of HB431 HD2 SD1, RELATING TO HOUSING.

HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 8:51:43 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Kilgore	Testifying for Full Life	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Jim Kilgore and I am the Executive Director of Full Life. Full Life provides home and community-based services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) on Hawai'i Island.

I am writing in support of HB431 HD2 SD1.

There is a critical lack of housing options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities on Hawai'i Island. Many families of people with I/DD are highly concerned about the lack of residential options for their family members when they are no longer able to provide the care themselves.

On Hawai'i Island, a supportive inclusive housing initiative, Koukua Kona, is working towards establishing a model combining access to services for people with disabilities and affordable housing. We are hopeful that HB431 would appropriate the funding needed to develop initiatives like Koukua Kona and other similar initiatives on Hawai'i Island.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB431 HD2 SD1.

HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 5:19:52 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Constance Dahl	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and mahalo for taking the time to read my testimony in support of HB 431.

My name is Constance Kauipualokelani Dahl, and I am a single mother of two living in Kailua-Kona, Hawai‘i. My youngest daughter was born with multiple disabilities, including Down syndrome, hearing impairment, and a congenital heart defect. She also experiences speech delay, intellectual impairment, and was recently diagnosed with autism.

As a mother navigating the challenges of raising a child with special needs, I understand the critical need for inclusive housing that fosters independence, safety, and a sense of belonging. That is why I am involved with **Kokua Kona**, a grassroots initiative dedicated to developing an **intentional living community** for individuals with disabilities in Kailua-Kona. Inspired by the shared home equity models of **Living Unlimited**, our vision is to create a supportive neighborhood where individuals of all abilities can thrive alongside those who are passionate about fostering inclusion.

HB 431 is a crucial step in making this vision a reality, as it provides funding to develop sustainable, community-centered housing solutions like the **Kauhale Initiative**. By supporting this bill, we are ensuring that individuals with disabilities, along with others in need of stable housing, have access to safe, long-term homes where they can live independently while receiving the support they need.

Hawai‘i has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the nation, and many families, including those with special needs children, struggle to find housing that accommodates their unique circumstances. By investing in **inclusive and intentional communities**, we are not just providing shelter—we are creating opportunities for meaningful connection, security, and a better quality of life for our most vulnerable populations.

I urge you to support HB 431 and help lay the foundation for a more **inclusive, compassionate, and sustainable future** for all of Hawai‘i’s residents.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Constance Kauipualokelani Dahl

808-494-5458



75-108 Nakukui Place
KAILUA KONA, HI 96740
(408) 836-3743
KOKUAKONA@GMAIL.COM

March 26, 2025

Aloha Kākou

I am writing on behalf of a planned Hawai'i Island housing community, Kokua Kona, which is highly aligned with Governor Green's Kauhale Initiative. We are very much in support of HB 431. We believe a village-like, integrated housing community like Kokua Kona would lead to a better sense of well-being for its' residents both in the present and in the years to come.

We are particularly aligned with the bill's intent to *"build[ing] partnerships between government and community, providing affordable spaces for housing and healing, and fostering belonging and responsibility."*

My son is profoundly autistic, non-speaking, and has seizure disorder. He has high support needs, and will likely require lifetime care. He also loves the water and is most at home in the pool or ocean. Because he is non-speaking, we very much want him to live in a safe community where his needs will be met, but he will not be in isolation. We intend Kokua Kona to be that place.

The overarching premise of our initiative is outlined below:

Housing that is Affordable:

There is an acute need for housing that is affordable across Hawai'i Island, with an extra challenge for individuals and families with developmental disabilities. Additionally, turnover in the caregiver community is high and we hope to support stability in the availability of support/care services by offering housing that is accessible and affordable.

Building Community:

The overall intention is to build community while also providing housing. Nationwide, only 10% of adults with developmental disabilities have access to support to live outside of their family home. About half of adults with autism report feeling lonely and/or depressed.

Serving the Wider West Hawai'i Island Community:

The fully realized community will be an integrated community where individuals with neurogenic differences, including those with intellectual / developmental disabilities can live safely, but are not isolated. The intention is for the community to be multi-generational. We believe the Kupuna can bring, but also find, healing by being in a specialized, sensory friendly environment designed to live peacefully with the keiki as one 'ohana. A portion of the community will be adults or families without special needs, including care providers.

Thank you for your consideration of our support for HB 431.

With gratitude and aloha,



LARA SANDORA

FOUNDER, KOKUAKONA.ORG

HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 9:56:11 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessica McCullum	Testifying for Ava Sofia Foundation DBA Autism Moms of Kona	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:



RE: HB 431 Relating to Housing

I'd first like to introduce my position - I've been a realtor for 8 years with Coldwell Banker Island Properties and have been raised in the family business of local real estate her in Kona for over 30 years. I am a 2005 graduate of Kamehameha Schools Kapālama and a Native Hawaiian woman. I am the mother of 3 children on the autism spectrum, one with a severe intellectual disability and the others with "level 1" autism and slight developmental delay. I am also the Founder of the Ava Sofia Foundation DBA Autism Moms of Kona, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit here in Kailua Kona.

I emphatically support the Kauhale initiative and the strategic coalescence of community partners with shared goals and needs for support, so that we can come together to incubate and nurture a collective healing and growth as a community.

Our nonprofit organization maintains a membership of 560 members, most of them representing an entire family unit. From this no cost membership, we have identified 150 keiki on the Kona side and 45 keiki on the Hilo side, and their families comprise our Qualified Members who have an official diagnosis of Autism or similar developmental delay or intellectual disability. The Kauhale initiative directly aligns with our our vision for housing that we call www.KokuaKona.org, and we would love to participate in any way.

We have spent the past few years studying different housing models for those with intellectual disabilities across the nation, and we believe that there is an opportunity to provide housing solutions not only for those who are an adult with a disability, but also those families needing safe housing that are raising children with neurogenic conditions such as autism and other intellectual disabilities, as well as our kupuna who are suffering from neurological diseases such as dementia, alzheimers, parkinsons, etc. We believe that with the right collaboration, there may be more opportunity to extend housing to our service providers for adequate retention of professionals such as Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Behavioral Therapists, Direct Support Workers through Waiver services, Pediatric Dentistry, Educators and Developmental Pediatricians – the list goes on. The communal space is an opportunity to build out the environment which these stakeholders heal together through cooperative play, art sessions, therapeutic horticulture, and so on, and there will be room to provide educational training to build independence and life skills.

The nuances of our business proposal might provide further solutions for the Kauhale movement in overcoming obstacles and barriers in realizing the first phases, because our business model is not so much Affordable Housing, yet housing that is affordable and which presents possibilities for subsidized housing, etc. It would provide economic reinforcement when it comes to working through the kinks with planning, permitting, water commitments, sustainable building, zoning, and a variety of other things that are unique to Hawai'i island. It would also delve into the implications of ensuring that communal housing is compliant with the Final Rule on Community Integration – the Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule

A little more about the Ava Sofia Foundation: We are a family-centered support network which is focused on supporting all members of a family that is raising a child on the Spectrum, so that they thrive in the home and integrate with their community. We individualize our relationship with families, identifying gaps in service provision and opportunities for care, and we work with them so that their family thrives in their home environment. We often assist with obtaining an official diagnosis, ensuring proper assessments are called for, advocating in the schools, and connecting with medical service providers such as ABA and Occupational therapists that can help. Our organizational culture is founded on Hawaiian cultural values - Kuleana, Ho'okipa, and Aloha – and this has brought much healing and hope to many who would have otherwise struggled with this silent disability in shame and isolation (shared in the news).

We work with small businesses and other non-profit organizations to enable Private Therapeutic Alternatives - group activities focused on sensory & nervous system regulation that is curated to accommodate individuals with disabilities. We have sought Access and made experiences such as Paddleboarding Rock Climbing, Movie Going Experiences, Group Yoga, Horticulture Scavenger Hunts, Story Time, Sound Baths in the Cloud Forest, Seashell Art at the Peace Gardens, and Horse therapy among many other collaborations and have had much success in integrating our families into their community. In addition, our team advocates immensely to encourage access to community services and equal opportunity through family engagement and inclusion. Our network spans to include support for other educators, service providers, as well as families with similar developmental disabilities and needs for support.





Thank you again for your dedication to supporting our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jessica McCullum".

Jessica McCullum

Founder

Ava Sofia Foundation DBA Autism Moms of Kona, and 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

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HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 8:29:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mountain Notter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Mountain Notter.

I am writing to support the HB431 HD2 SDI Bill .

I have two grown children who have Autism Soectrum Disorder.

My daughter is 26 years old and has been diagnosed, since the age of 3 with level 3 autism and severe emotional disturbance.

She has tried so hard, all of her adult life, to live independently. This has resulted in so much emotional trauma and many times, the loss of all that she owned. She has been stolen from, mistreated, and taken advantage of everyone whom she's ever saught out for help in this area.

This housing solution would place her in close enough proximity to several reputable organizations that would actually help her to manage herself well enough that she could begin to heal and to become a functioning asset to our community, rather than feeling inferior to general society and remaining a burden.

HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 8:41:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronnie Notter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support HB431 because I believe housing for mid-functioning individuals on the autism spectrum, such as my daughter who is level three on the spectrum, is an essential commodity due to the fact these individuals are often capable of caring for themselves on a very basic level but tend to lack the capacity to maintain their finances, medicine schedules, appointments, bill payments, and administrative functions that would allow them to secure a home. This proposed housing provision would go along way to fill this critical gap in their lives.

HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 4:34:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madison Marriott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

One thing I know is certain when it comes to children, it takes a village. With people with special needs it also takes a community. Not everyone, including myself and my son did not have.

My name is Madison Marriott. I now live with my mother & son in a condo complex in a prestige area in Kona. My son, Max, was diagnosed with autism level 2, non verbal last year in January 2024.

Around that time we were transitioning moving into my mother's home. Our upstairs and next door neighbors have both confronted me about my child. On one instance I was told my son should be put in a home, on medication and outside. It was so emotional & defeating and traumatic experience for us. My son is just living and being vocal. It added extra stress to our daily lives constantly hearing negative comments from neighbors who just didn't understand.

This housing initiative would be life changing and so beneficial for my family. We do not feel alone or judged when we are with our peers. To be able to live in a community that can support our needs and frankly our moral is what our children with special needs deserve.

I worry about where my son will go when he is an adult. To have housing would assure they would get support and live a life with dignity. Being a disabled adult and no one to help take care of you is a scary reality.

Mahalos for your time,

Madison & Max

HB-431-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/26/2025 8:32:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/28/2025 10:02:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Franz Weber	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the bill