

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 HOUSING

March 11, 2025 at 1:10 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 225

In consideration of H.B. 739 HD2 RELATING TO HOUSING

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 739 HD2, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program under the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to provide funding from the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

Especially in certain desirable neighborhoods, local homebuyers must compete with out-of-state buyers who are purchasing second homes. This increases the cost of housing and once housing units are converted to second homes, reduces the housing stock available for residents. The proposed deed restriction program will create an inventory of homes reserved for local residents, stabilize prices, and reduce speculation in our housing market.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII'
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA**

PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Chang and Committee members:

SUBJECT: HB739 HD2 Relating to Housing

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB739 HD2**, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

Stable and affordable housing is essential for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live independent, self-determined lives within their communities. Access to affordable housing remains a significant barrier for individuals with I/DD in Hawai'i. Many rely on fixed incomes or limited financial resources, making market-rate housing unattainable. This lack of affordable options can lead to institutionalization or dependence on family caregivers, limiting opportunities for community integration, employment, and overall quality of life.

The Kama'āina Homes Program offers promising solutions. By supporting long-term affordability through voluntary deed restrictions, the program could provide stable housing for individuals with I/DD, reducing the risk of homelessness and housing insecurity. Affordable, community-based housing options would empower these individuals to live alongside their peers, fostering inclusive neighborhoods where everyone can thrive. With stable housing, individuals with I/DD would have more opportunities to pursue employment, education, and community activities, promoting greater self-sufficiency and reducing reliance on state-funded services. Additionally, access to affordable housing would alleviate the burden on family caregivers, lessening stress related to long-term care planning and enhancing the overall well-being of entire families.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB739 HD2**.

Sincerely,

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

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB739 HD2
RELATING TO HOUSING
Senate Committee on Housing

March 11th, 2025

1:10 p.m.

Room 225

Aloha e Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, members of the committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB739 HD2, which would establish a kama'aina homes program and provide counties funding through the dwelling unit revolving fund established pursuant to section 201H-191 to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

This bill proposes a State-funded initiative that partners HHFDC with counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers to ensure that housing remains available to residents working at a qualifying business, subject to exemptions for age and disability. These restrictions would run with the land in perpetuity. This innovative initiative will assist in preserving affordability for kama'aina and protect property value to ensure it remains attainable and accessible to Hawai'i residents as primary residences, with the requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being sold to outside investors for profit or used for short-term vacation rentals. It will prioritize kama'aina housing needs and is an investment in local community, sustainable economy, and future generations of kama'aina.

Stable housing for kama'aina reduces cultural dislocation, mitigates the pressure on residents to move out of state due to the high cost of living in Hawai'i, and strengthens 'ohana. This initiative is in line with OHA's mission to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians and ensure equitable access to housing, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. It reflects our commitment to advancing the well-being of our beneficiaries and the broader community.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to share our mana'o and urges the Committee to PASS HB739 HD2. Mahalo nui loa.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097



March 11, 2025
1:10 p.m.
State Capitol
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

HB 739, HD2
RELATING TO HOUSING

Senate Committee on Housing

The Department of Transportation (DOT) strongly supports HB739, HD2, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program as a proactive measure to address Hawaii's critical housing crisis.

Hawaii's housing affordability challenges are among the most pressing issues of our time. With the median home price now exceeding \$800,000, homeownership has become unattainable for many local families. This untenable situation has forced an increasing number of residents, including essential workers, to leave Hawaii in search of affordable living options elsewhere. The resulting outmigration not only diminishes our workforce but also erodes the cultural fabric and sense of community that make Hawaii unique.

DOT recognizes the intrinsic link between housing stability, economic resilience, and cultural preservation. By enabling local families to remain in Hawaii, HB739, HD2 not only meets an urgent housing need but also lays the foundation for a more secure and vibrant future for our state.

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

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau
P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 739, H.D. 2, Relating to Housing

BEFORE THE:

Senate Committee on Housing

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 2025

TIME: 1:10 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 225

Chair Chang, Vice-Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 739, H.D. 2, for your consideration.

H.B. 739, H.D. 2, establishes a new "Kamaaina Homes Program" to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or buyers who limit occupancy to owner-occupants or resident tenants that live and work in the State. The purpose is to secure a dedicated housing supply for locals.

Section 2 of the bill, on page 10, line 1, establishes a chapter 247 conveyance tax exemption under the new subsection 201H-E(b), HRS, for property sold with a deed restriction pursuant to the Kamaaina Homes Program.

Section 5 of the bill, on page 24, line 7, amends section 247-3, HRS, by adding a conveyance tax exemption for any document or instrument conveying real property that contains a county owned deed restriction pursuant to the Kamaaina Homes Program. Section 5 also exempts any document or instrument conveying the county owned deed restriction.

The measure has a defective effective date of July 1, 3000.

DOTAX requests that if this bill is passed, section 5 take effect on January 1, 2026, to allow for form and instruction changes necessary to implement the proposed conveyance tax exemption.

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

OFFICE OF HOUSING
KE KE'ENA HO'OLĀLĀ KŪKULA HALE
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 306 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-4675 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • WEBSITE: www.honolulu.gov/housing

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
ME/IA



KEVIN AUGER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PO'O HO'OKO

March 10, 2025

2025-HOU-034

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: Testimony Supporting the Intent of HB739, HD2 – Relating to Housing
Hearing: Tues., Mar. 11, 2025, 1:10 p.m. at the State Capitol, Rm. 225

The Office of Housing **supports the intent** of HB739 HD2 that would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program to incentivize the deeded reservation of homes for local residents. This bill would enable the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to allocate funds from the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund (DURF) to the counties for the purpose of purchasing deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers on a voluntary basis to ensure the property is available for local residents in perpetuity.

With the alarming rate of out-migration from our islands, we recognize the need to innovate to find additional ways to not only create new housing, but also preserve units within the existing housing stock for local residents. While the City appreciates this proposal to help house local residents, we have several concerns that may require additional study and discussion if a successful deed restriction program is to be implemented. Our concerns relate to capacity challenges, lack of positions and staff, potential impacts to real property tax revenues, eligibility criteria, implementation timelines, enforceability, and the actual effectiveness of this program in Honolulu at a heightened scale compared to Vail, Colorado, with a resident population of 4,521 as of 2023; HB739 is based on Vail's deed restriction program.

HB739 HD2 requires that counties be responsible for administering, validating evidence, and ensuring compliance with the proposed program. While the bill allows the counties to establish and collect fees and premiums to cover these costs, there is no dedicated funding source to establish and stand-up full-time equivalent (FTE) positions to administer, train, and enforce the program, or meet the annual reporting requirements that will continue for the length of recorded deed restrictions, potentially into perpetuity, even if program funding is terminated at some point in the future.

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol
March 10, 2025
Page 2

The City and County of Honolulu does not currently have the capacity to administer this program and the bill's language is unclear if a portion of the DURF funds provided to the counties could be used for administrative funding purposes. Additionally, the City is not currently in the business of purchasing and owning deed restrictions as this process usually is conducted by an applicant or homebuyer directly through the Hawai'i State Bureau of Conveyances. If the City was to take on this responsibility, we would need appropriate funding and time to either onboard new staff with the required expertise, train new and existing staff, or contract out to a third-party entity. The time and skill required to negotiate the price of a deed restriction on a case-by-case basis alone would require extensive costs and may require clarification that these purchases are in the public interest, despite being exempt from the procurement process.

Acknowledging the many issues associated with deeded restrictive housing requirements, we appreciate this bold attempt to provide housing inventory dedicated to residents. Local families need affordable housing options. Given our concerns with this particular proposal, if this measure is to move forward, we request these issues be addressed as the discussions continue. The City and County of Honolulu wants to be part of a solution that protects housing inventory for our local families, but we need the funding, capacity, and expertise to make this work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Kevin D. Auger
Executive Director

APPROVED:



Michael D. Formby, Managing Director
Office of the Managing Director

KAUA'I COUNTY HOUSING AGENCY

ADAM ROVERSI, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Adam Roversi

Director, Kaua'i County Housing Agency

Before the

Senate Committee on Housing

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 1:10 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

In consideration of

House Bill 739 HD2 Relating to Housing

Honorable Chair Stanley Chang, Vice Chair Troy N. Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Kaua'i County Housing Agency **supports** HB739 HD2, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

The Kaua'i County Housing Agency has been studying similar long-standing programs in several rocky mountain communities on the mainland. Like Kaua'i, these mainland jurisdictions have seen high demand for resort and second homes that squeeze out local residents, including essential workers necessary for a functioning community. Deed restricted homes available only to local employed renters or owners is a demonstrated potential solution to ensuring much needed housing for local residents.

Kaua'i County has already begun developing administrative rules to implement such a program. We would very much welcome a partnership with the state to help make it a reality, and encourage the legislature to permit Counties to utilize a reasonable portion of program funds allocated to the Counties for administrative costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** and for your consideration.





HOUSE BILL 739, HD2, RELATING TO HOUSING

MARCH 11, 2025 · HOU HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** HB 739, HD2, relating to housing, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

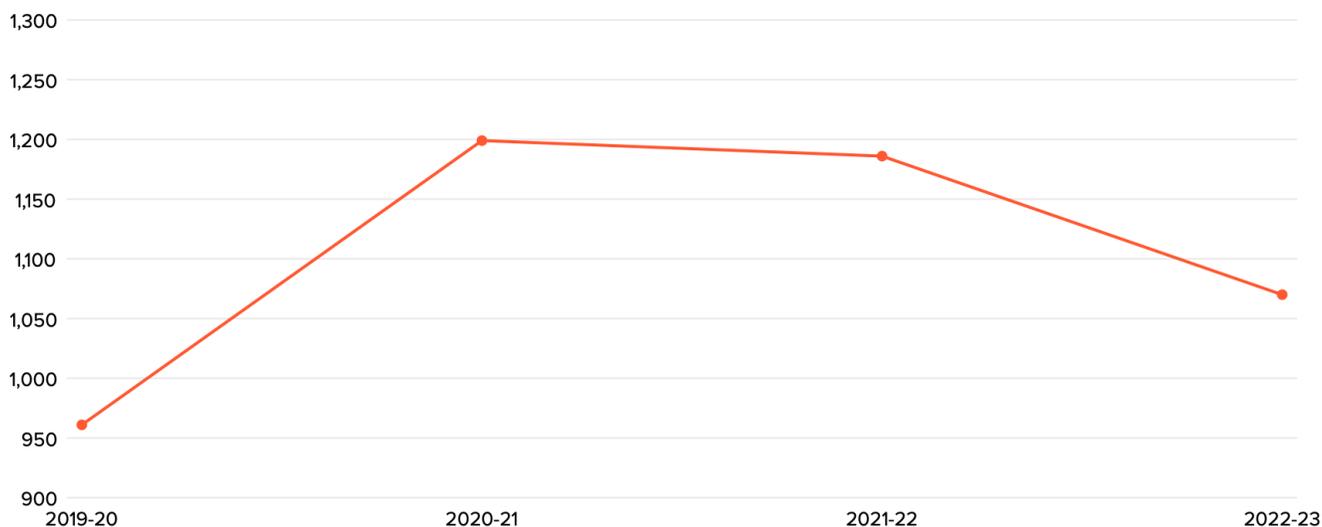
Teachers are the most important professionals in increasing student achievement. According to numerous studies, however, Hawai'i's average teacher salaries are the lowest in the nation when adjusted for cost of living. A 2020 study conducted by APA Consulting on behalf of the Hawai'i Department of Education found that when compared with other high-cost geographic locations, Hawai'i teachers are paid \$7,700 to \$26,000 less than their peers in school districts with similar costs of living, depending on length of service.

While that pay gap is decreasing because of the State Legislature's effort to fund differential pay increases and resolve salary compression in recent years, teachers are still underpaid compared to other professions that require a similar level of education. **Establishing programs to make housing affordable and accessible for teachers and other members of the education workforce would help offset the low wages experienced by Hawai'i's educators.**

A 2022 survey by the Annenberg Institute at Brown University placed Hawai'i among the 10 states with the lowest teacher-to-population ratio. Moreover, as *Honolulu Civil Beat* reported in August of last year, voluntary teacher separations remain high, at over 1,000 per year (see chart below).

Voluntary teacher separations, 2019 to 2023

The number of teachers annually leaving the DOE remains high but has started to decline following the pandemic.



DOE has not released data for the 2023-24 school year.

Chart: Megan Tagami/Civil Beat • Source: [Hawaii DOE](#)

These trends are further exacerbated by the aging teacher workforce. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association has repeatedly cautioned against being overly optimistic about positive teacher retention data, **with a wave of experienced educators expected to retire in the next few years.**

We need to find permanent solutions to address our state's ongoing teacher shortage.

Hawai'i residents face some of the highest housing costs in the nation, at more than twice the national average. Researchers who authored the National Low Income Housing Coalition's *Out of Reach 2024* report found that a full-time worker would need to earn \$44.60/hour—\$or \$92,768 per year—to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value in our state, with Honolulu experiencing a 67 percent increase in fair market rent between 2005 and 2015. Average rent for a two-bedroom unit surpassed \$2,000 well before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

One out of every four households in Hawai'i report that they are “doubling up” or are three paychecks or less away from being homeless, per the Hawai'i Applesseed Center for Law and

Economic Justice. Additionally, over 60 percent of households are severely cost-burdened, meaning that they pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing, a number that rises to over 80 percent of extremely low-income households.

A recent survey conducted by the Holomua Collective found that 60 percent of residents face worries about not being able to pay a monthly bill and 63 percent face difficulties in saving money from their paychecks for future emergencies, retirement, or other expenses. A staggering 70 percent of middle-class respondents to Holomua’s survey say they will—or are unsure if they will have to—relocate in the coming years. As Holomua Collective states in its report on the findings, “These are the very workers powering Hawai‘i’s economy, now on the brink of leaving their homes behind.” That population includes the teachers who are tasked with educating our keiki.

This proposal is modeled on the “Vail InDEED” program in Colorado which has been successfully replicated across the country. Managed by the Vail Local Housing Authority (VLHA) and funded through the town’s general fund, Vail InDEED allows the town to purchase deed restrictions from homeowners and developers to permanently limit the occupancy of a given unit to individuals employed in Eagle County. At considerably less than full development cost, the program has obtained deed restrictions on dozens of residences—including all 65 units in the Solar Vail apartment building. Vail InDEED, a cornerstone of the Vail Housing 2027 plan, won the Urban Land Institute’s Robert C. Larson Housing Policy Leadership Award in 2020. In its first 4 years, the Vail InDEED program has purchased deed restrictions on 165 units, rendering it an indispensable component of what Ruther calls an “all-of-the-above” strategy for pursuing the 1,000-unit goal of the Vail Housing 2027 plan.

To deliver the schools our keiki deserve, we must recruit and retain qualified educators. Our children’s future depends on our ability to meet that challenge.

Contact: educationcaucusdph@gmail.com • 808-679-7454



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

March 11, 2025

Senate Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 739 HD2 - RELATING TO HOUSING

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 739 HD2** which would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program, funding and allowing counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners and homebuyers.

We believe in fixing incentives, and this includes creating innovative and targeted incentives. Hawai'i homebuyers continue to struggle to compete with non-Hawai'i buyers both because of lack of funds and a non-dedicated housing stock. This innovative incentive will let counties purchase **voluntary** deed restrictions that require the owner-occupant and/or renters be recently retired from or be a full time employee of a Hawai'i business, with appropriate protections for those experiencing involuntary unemployment or disability. In the long-term, more homes volunteer for the deed restriction creating a stock of homes dedicated to those who work and live in Hawai'i.

This alone will neither solve the housing crisis, nor increase housing supply, however, it is a long range approach to incentivize homebuyers and homeowners to dedicate their home to local working families of tomorrow. It is of the utmost importance, in the ongoing effort to address the housing crisis, we explore multiple avenues that address both the technical and emotional aspects. We *need* to build more housing, but we also need to help our residents feel a sense of hope that these homes can be a meaningful addition to the community.



Hawai'i YIMBY

Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.org

info@hawaiiyimby.org

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Damien Waikoloa

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





HB 739, HD2, RELATING TO HOUSING

MARCH 11, 2025 · HOU HEARING

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports HB 739, HD2, relating to housing, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

Imua Alliance is a victim service provider for survivors of sex trafficking. Over the past 15 years, we have provided comprehensive direct intervention services to over 200 victims, successfully emancipating them from slavery and assisting in their restoration, while providing a range of targeted services to over 1,000 victims and individuals at risk of sexual exploitation. During the pandemic, demand for victim services to our organization has skyrocketed by 330 percent, driven in part by a fivefold increase in direct crisis calls from potential trafficking victims. **Housing insecurity has been and continues to be a major contributing factor in exacerbating an individual's susceptibility to exploitation, a trend that was significantly amplified during the pandemic and that continues to worsen each year.**

Each of the victims we have assisted has suffered from complex and overlapping trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety, dissociation, parasuicidal behavior, and substance abuse. Trafficking-related trauma can lead to a complete loss of identity. A victim we cared for in 2016, for example, had become so heavily trauma bonded to her pimp that while under his grasp, she couldn't remember her own name. Yet, sadly, many of the victims

with whom we work are misidentified as so-called “voluntary prostitutes” and are subsequently arrested and incarcerated, with no financial resources from which to pay for their release.

Sex trafficking is a profoundly violent crime. At least 23 percent of trafficking victims in Hawai‘i report being first exploited before turning 18, according to a recent report, with the average age of trafficked keiki’s initial exposure to exploitation being 11. Based on regular outreach and monitoring, we estimate that approximately 150 high-risk sex trafficking establishments operate in Hawai‘i. In a recent report conducted by the State Commission on the Status of Women, researchers from Arizona State University found that 1 in every 11 adult males living in our state buys sex online. When visitors are also counted, that number worsens to 1 in every 7 men walking the streets of our island home and a daily online sex buyer market of 18,614 for O‘ahu and a total sex buyer population for the island of 74,362, including both tourists and residents.

ASU’s findings are grim, but not surprising to local organizations that provide services to survivors of sex trafficking. Imua Alliance, for example, has trained volunteers to perform outreach to victims in high-risk locations, like strip clubs, massage parlors, and hostess bars. More than 80 percent of runaway youth report being approached for sexual exploitation while on the run, over 30 percent of whom are targeted within the first 48 hours of leaving home. With regard to mental health, sex trafficking victims are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as a soldier in a war zone.

Greater than 80 percent of victims report being repeatedly raped and 95 percent report being physically assaulted, numbers that are underreported, according to the United States Department of State and numerous trauma specialists, because of the inability of many victims to recognize sexual violence. As one underage survivor told Imua Alliance prior to being rescued, “I can’t be raped. Only good girls can be raped. I’m a bad girl. If I *want* to be raped, I have to *earn* it.”

Accordingly, **we support measures to advance our state’s fight against sexual servitude, including this bill’s effort to expand access to housing for local families.** In 2017, the town of Vail, Colorado launched an innovative program to ensure housing affordability for residents and workers in Eagle County: the Vail InDEED program. Managed by the Vail Local Housing Authority (VLHA) and funded through the town’s general fund, Vail InDEED allows the town to purchase

deed restrictions from homeowners and developers to permanently limit the occupancy of a given unit to individuals employed in Eagle County.

A deed restriction, also called a restrictive covenant, is a condition attached to the deed of a property. As a major tourist destination with limited developable land and a vested interest in controlling the image it presents to its many annual visitors, Vail has used deed restrictions extensively. George Ruther, director of the Vail Department of Housing, explains that Vail has used several different types of deed restriction to pursue housing and community stability goals since the 1990s. The Vail InDEED program is a new push to buy deed restrictions on both rental and ownership units that regulate who may occupy the units.

Housing insecure women and children are perceived as easy targets for sex traffickers because they lack stable shelter, a supportive environment, and financial resources, placing them at greater risk of forced prostitution and sexual servitude. Traffickers exploit our limited number of available shelter beds to lure young people into exploitation. As the homeless childcare provider Covenant House observes, traffickers tell homeless youth that shelters are full and ask, “Where are you going to go? Why don’t you come with me? I’ll take care of you.” Coupled with threats of and actual physical and sexual violence against the victims or their families, these coercive techniques compel runaway youth to remain enslaved.

LGBTQ youth, who comprise an estimated 40 percent of the runaway and homeless youth population in the United States, are exponentially more likely to fall prey to human traffickers because of discrimination, family and community trauma, and a longing for comfort and acceptance (an estimated 26 percent of LGBTQ adolescents are rejected by their families and put out of their homes simply for being open and honest about who they are). In providing care for victims of human trafficking, we have heard their stories hundreds of times.

We cannot continue to allow the islands to be used as a private Monopoly board for property speculators. We must act now to deliver housing for working families.

Contact us at imuaalliance.org/contact



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813
866-295-7282 | aarp.org/hi | hiaarp@aarp.org |
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

**The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Housing
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
Conference Room 225
1:10 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Stanley Chang
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 739, HD2 Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang and Members of the Committee:

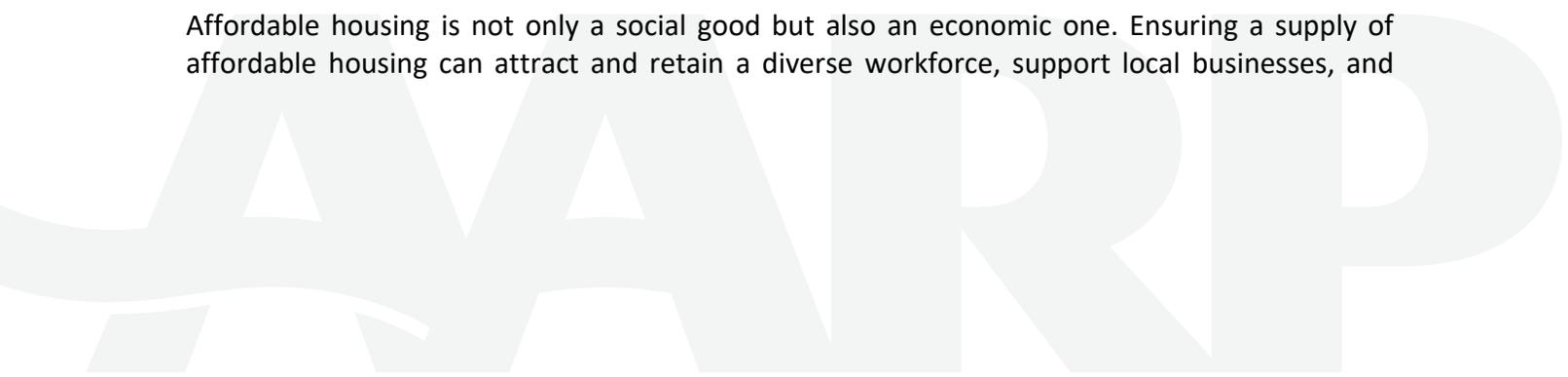
I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director of AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. On behalf of our nearly 135,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

AARP is in support of H.B. 739, HD2 which seeks to establish the Kamaaina Homes Program that provides funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or home buyers. AARP believes this bill is an important step towards addressing the housing affordability crisis in Hawaii.

H.B. 739 HD2 aligns with AARP's housing policy, which emphasizes the importance of increasing the availability of affordable housing options for all residents, particularly older adults. By allowing voluntary deed restrictions, this bill encourages property owners to contribute to the creation of affordable housing units, thereby helping to meet the growing demand for such housing.

Stable and affordable housing is a cornerstone of vibrant and resilient communities. By supporting this measure, we can foster long-term community stability and prevent displacement caused by rising housing costs. This bill provides a mechanism for preserving affordable housing stock, which benefits all residents.

Affordable housing is not only a social good but also an economic one. Ensuring a supply of affordable housing can attract and retain a diverse workforce, support local businesses, and



contribute to the overall economic health of our state. Senate Bill 490 can play a pivotal role in achieving these economic benefits. Having affordable housing enables working families stay together and help support older adults to age in place. This stability is essential for the well-being of our aging population

H.B. 739, HD2 represents a thoughtful and balanced approach to addressing our state's housing challenges. By establishing the Kamaaina Homes program, Hawaii can make significant strides towards ensuring that all residents have access to safe, affordable, and stable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.

.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB739 HD2 – Relating to Housing
Senate Committee on Housing
Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 1:10PM | Conf. Rm. 225 and via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB739 HD2**, which would establish the “Kama‘aina Homes Program” which would provide funding to counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions to preserve our existing housing stock for residents.

This legislation is thoughtful and based on successful models like the “Vail InDEED” program in Colorado which is a nationally recognized model being duplicated in many jurisdictions across the country¹. The program has been successful in housing Vail’s workforce and has been an efficient use of tax payer money—in 2020 it was reported that the InDEED program acquired 153 units costing \$10.5M through the voluntary deed restriction program in comparison to when the town purchased a 288 unit apartment for \$200M².

Under current market conditions, Hawaii’s soaring housing costs—now with median home prices exceeding \$900,000³—have made homeownership unattainable for many local families. According to UHERO’s “Hawaii Housing Factbook 2024,” only 20% of residents can afford to purchase a home in the current market⁴. This program tackles this pressing issue by creating a dedicated stock of housing units exclusively reserved for local residents, effectively establishing a “locals-only” housing market.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,

Arjuna Heim
Director of Housing Policy

¹ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/casestudies/study-081121.html>

² <https://www.vaildaily.com/news/vail-indeed-program-earns-national-recognition-for-innovation/>

³ <https://www.locationshawaii.com/learn/market-reports/hawaii-statewide-real-estate-report/>

⁴ <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2024.pdf>



TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee

FROM: Micah A. Kāne, CEO & President

RE: Testimony in Support for HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 2025 at 1:10pm

PLACE: Conference Room 225

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) supports HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Housing is a priority area within HCF's CHANGE Framework under the "C" sector of Community Centered Economy. Per UHERO, "median housing costs in Hawaii are more than 2.7 times the national level"¹ and median rents are the highest in the country.² ALICE families are more vulnerable because of our current housing market.

The demand for attainable local housing currently enveloping Hawai'i is at crisis levels. Too many people who do not live or work in Hawai'i are owning and driving up the costs of our housing market, which contributes to a record outmigration of local residents. The agony of this dynamic is punctuated by the fact that more Hawaiians now live out of Hawai'i than in Hawai'i.

While efforts to improve housing have shown progress, it is evident that current perspectives and efforts need to be expanded, and new creative solutions must be adopted. Hyper prioritization of major off-site infrastructure improvements that can effectuate housing, broad-based collaboration and regulatory reform are more critical now than ever.

We support the creation of the Kama'āina Homes Program because it can serve as one part of the solution that we seek through HCF's House Maui Initiative. The House Maui Initiative strives to simultaneously drive down the final cost of housing at market, while preparing local families for the financial journey to home ownership. However, if properties are then

¹ [UHERO 2023 Hawaii Housing Factbook](#) at page 1.

² [UHERO 2024 Hawaii Housing Factbook](#) at page 6.



purchased as investments or second homes, then the purpose is defeated. A deed restriction program can help counties with funding and structure that allows the county to level the playing field and improve the odds for local, working families to get into these homes.

Broadly, selling a deed restriction can create a variety of meaningful impacts on our community. A deed restriction sold is a promise to the community that another home is available for a working family in perpetuity. A deed restriction sold is an opportunity for a new homebuyer to have the down payment for their first home. It can also help an existing homeowner to fund necessary repairs to their aging home or replace the cesspool on their property. Without that funding, staying in the home may not be affordable. A deed restriction sold is an opportunity for the government to make an investment in our future and preserve our local culture by expanding home inventory for residents.

Kama'āina want to stay in Hawai'i and HB 739 HD2 can open that door and provide that hope. There is universal agreement that locals need more places to call home. Homes must be affordable so residents will be free from the pressure of leaving the island. HB 739 HD2 is an innovative solution that contributes to more housing for our community, and HCF strongly supports it.



1200 Ala Kapuna Street • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96819
Tel: (808) 833-2711 • Fax: (808) 839-7106 • Web: www.hsta.org

Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

1

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Item: HB 739, HD2 – Relating to Housing

Position: Support

Hearing: Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 1:10 pm, Room 225

Submitter: Osa Tui, Jr., President - Hawai'i State Teachers Association

Dear Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association (HSTA) supports HB 739, HD2 which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program. As you know, Hawai'i is in the midst of a severe housing crisis, making homeownership unattainable for many local working families. The average price of a home in Hawai'i is now over \$800,000, an amount out of reach for most working residents. This crisis is not only affecting families, but also essential workers like teachers who are struggling to find affordable housing. The lack of affordable housing has led to an outmigration of residents, including Native Hawaiians, who are leaving the islands to seek a more affordable life.

HB 739, HD2 offers a potential solution by prioritizing workforce housing and ensuring that homes are occupied by local residents. We believe this program could help alleviate the housing crisis and allow essential workers, like teachers, to remain in Hawai'i. A similar program in Vail, Colorado, has proven successful in creating deed-restricted homes for local working residents. We urge the committee to pass HB 739, HD2 and invest in the future of Hawai'i by keeping local families and essential workers in our communities.

Mahalo.

To: Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 739 H.D. 2 – Relating to Housing

Hearing: Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 1:10 PM, Conference Room 225

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. No. 739 H.D. 2**, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide funding to counties for purchasing voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners and homebuyers.

Stable, affordable housing is critical to the well-being of Hawai'i's families and keiki. However, the rising cost of homeownership continues to push local families out of the state, threatening our communities' cultural and economic fabric. By creating the Kama'āina Homes Program, this bill offers a long-term solution to keep homes affordable for future generations while supporting local families who wish to stay and raise their keiki in Hawai'i.

Voluntary deed restrictions have proven effective in preventing speculative real estate practices that drive up housing costs. By ensuring that homes remain accessible to local residents rather than outside investors, this bill strengthens the stability of our communities and prevents the continued displacement of Native Hawaiian and generational local families.

We believe that investing in programs that protect local homeownership aligns with our mission to ensure that all keiki in Hawai'i have the opportunity to grow up in a safe, supportive, and stable environment. We urge the committee to pass **H.B. No. 739 H.D.2** to take a meaningful step toward securing affordable housing for our communities and future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical measure.



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 225
Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 1:10 P.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Housing

SUPPORT HB739 HD2 RELATING TO HOUSING

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB739 HD2** which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

Housing is one of the Maui Chamber's top priorities as we are in a housing crisis. Ensuring the availability of attainable homes and rentals is essential to the well-being of our residents. It is also a vital pillar in our efforts toward workforce stability and economic recovery.

This is another excellent tool in the toolbox for housing.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT HB739 HD2**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



holomua

COLLABORATIVE

OUR MISSION

To support and advance public policies that make Hawai'i affordable for all working families.

OUR VISION

Collaborative, sustainable, and evidence-based public policies that create a diverse and sustainable Hawai'i economy, an abundance of quality job opportunities, and a future where all working families living in Hawai'i can thrive.

BOARD MEMBERS

Jason Fujimoto
Meli James, *Board Chair*
Micah Kāne
Brandon Kurisu
Brad Nicolai
Mike Pietsch
Sunshine Topping

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Josh Feldman
Brittany Heyd
Alicia Moy
Ed Schultz

Josh Wisch
President & Executive Director

827 Fort Street Mall, 2nd Floor
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

+1 (808) 542-4089
info@holomuacollaborative.org

HolomuaCollaborative.org

Page 1 of 4

Committee: Senate Committee on Housing
Bill Number: HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing
Hearing Date and Time: March 11, 2025, 1:10pm (Room 225)
Re: Testimony of Holomua Collaborative – Support

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of HB 739 HB2, Relating to Housing. This bill would establish and fund the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Hawai'i remains in a housing crisis. Skyrocketing home prices leave many local families struggling to secure safe, attainable places to live. The median home price in Hawai'i now exceeds \$800,000—an impossible amount for most residents. As a result, many local families are being forced to leave in search of affordable living options elsewhere. Between July 2022 and July 2023 alone, an average of twelve people left Hawai'i *every day*.¹ More Native Hawaiians now live outside Hawai'i than within it. This is a loss of our culture, traditions, and the essence of what makes Hawai'i home.

In October 2024, a survey² gathering information about the day-to-day financial experience of local workers was released and it suggests this growing crisis has the potential to reach staggering levels. When nearly 1,500 local workers were asked if they may need to move to a less expensive state, only thirty-one percent answered a definitive “no,” while sixty-nine percent said “yes” or “unsure.” And nearly two-thirds of the respondents said the cost of housing was the primary impact on their cost of living in Hawai'i. Each local worker and family we lose to the continent contributes to a loss of our economy, our culture, and our family.

The high cost of living and limited attainable housing options have led many people in our local workforce – teachers, firefighters, health care workers, and more - to consider relocating to the continent, further deepening our state's labor shortages and eroding the quality of life for all residents.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an income-blind, voluntary initiative, based on programs successfully deployed in other jurisdictions. It would create a dedicated housing supply for local residents by empowering the Counties to purchase perpetual deed restrictions on properties that require occupants to live and work in Hawai'i.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division Estimates, released on March 14, 2024; and calculations by the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism, Hawai'i State Data Center.

https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/census/popestimate/2023/county-pop/2023_daily_est_counties.pdf

² <https://holomuacollective.org/survey/>

In the face of our state's ongoing housing crisis, this program represents a critical investment in the future of Hawai'i—both in terms of our economy and our cultural heritage. This program would ensure housing is reserved for local families for generations. And it would help reverse the trend of families and workers leaving Hawai'i by providing them with the opportunity to live in their communities long term.

A program with similar principles, Vail InDEED³, offers an inspiring example. Launched in 2018, Vail, Colorado, created a voluntary program that allowed the town to purchase deed restrictions on homes, ensuring they were only available to local residents. This program has reduced the pressure on the housing market and improved the overall stability of the community. Not only has it fostered a supportive environment for local families, but it has also strengthened the community by ensuring that the people who work in Vail can *afford* to live there, too.

A key feature of the Kama'āina Homes Program is the lack of restriction the program places on how the moneys received by an eligible homeowner or homebuyer can be used. A significant portion of money exchanged in return for deed restrictions in Vail was used by first time homebuyers, as it provided a sum of money for down payments to families that would otherwise never be able to save for a down payment. Flexibility in how the money can be used—whether for the construction of an ADU, a down payment, cesspool conversion, infrastructure improvements or renovations, tuition, healthcare, or some other important need—is a key draw for many prospective participants.

Finally, we note that the Kama'āina Homes Program is one of the most *efficient* ways for the government to invest funding into housing for a local workforce. In terms of dollars per unit per year, the return on investment realized through this program compounds over time. For example, if a county under this program paid \$50,000 for a deed restriction, then in 10 years the cost per unit per year is only \$5,000. In 50 years, it would only be \$1,000 per year. The longer the home stays in the program, the more efficient the program becomes.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It's an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and a place where local working families can afford to stay.

³ See <https://www.vail.gov/government/departments/housing/vailindeed>

We respectfully request the Committee consider making four amendments to the measure:

- (1) Limit the amount of funding from the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund that an eligible homeowner or homebuyer can receive from the program to be no more than:
 - (a) 5% of the appraised value of the property if the funding is not used for ADU construction costs; or
 - (b) 8% of the appraised value of the property if the funding is used for ADU construction costs;
- (2) Limit the amount of funding from the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund that can be used for this program to be no more than \$20,000,000 per biennium; and
- (3) Add an additional section that specifies that if funds from the Kama'āina Homes Program are used to build an accessory dwelling unit (ADU), then the ADU must also comply with the deed restriction occupancy requirements. However, relatives of the primary dwelling unit's occupant who live in the ADU would not be in violation of the occupancy requirements. Suggested language as follows:

“§201H- Construction of an accessory dwelling unit; exemption. (a) If the money granted pursuant to this subpart is used to finance the construction costs, development costs, or non-reoccurring closing costs associated with the construction of an accessory dwelling unit on the deed restricted property, the deed restriction shall apply to the primary dwelling unit and the constructed accessory dwelling unit.

(b) An accessory dwelling unit constructed with moneys pursuant to this subpart that is occupied by a relative, by blood, marriage, or adoption, of an occupant of the primary dwelling unit shall not be in violation of the occupancy requirements established pursuant to this subpart.

(c) As used in this section:

"Accessory dwelling unit" means an accessory or a second dwelling unit that includes its own kitchen, bedroom, and bathroom facilities, and is attached or detached from the primary dwelling unit on the zoning lot on which the primary dwelling unit of the owner is located.

"Development costs" includes costs associated with site preparation, architectural or engineering design, permits, soil tests, impact fees, and property survey."

We urge you to support the Kama'āina Homes Program for the sake of Hawai'i's future, and for the generations of local families who will benefit from the stability, security, and opportunity this program offers.

Sincerely,



Joshua Wisch
President & Executive Director

LATE

March 10, 2025

Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Legislature

Dear Senator Chang and members of the Committee on Housing,

The Hawai'i Island Housing Coalition would like to submit this written testimony in strong support of HB739 HD2 related to housing.

As proposed the measure would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers. The Hawai'i Island Housing Coalition feels this bill would provide one form of a viable solution to our mounting housing crisis and in particular provide housing options for our local residents and families.

HB739 HD2 is truly an investment in Hawai'i's future by creating the opportunity to preserve housing inventory at an attainable and affordable price or rate that puts housing within reach of the working local residents of every community. This translates, and is essential to a sustainable economy and the preservation of our culture for future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony and we strongly encourage your support and passage of this measure.

Sincerely,
Darryl Oliveira, Co-Chair
Hawai'i Island Housing Coalition

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

Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Housing

HB739 – Relating to Housing

RE: Strong support of HB739

March 11, 2025

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) writes in **strong support of HB739**. This bill is critical to mitigating the ongoing and worsening impacts of the rising cost of living that make it difficult for working local and Native Hawaiian residents to secure attainable housing.

The average price of a home in Hawai'i has now surpassed \$800,000. As a result, Native Hawaiians are forced to seek affordable housing out of state, leading to more Native Hawaiians residing outside of Hawai'i than within. Since 1984, existing home prices have increased by 155%, while Hawai'i's median household income has risen only 24%. High housing prices disproportionately impact our working families and young people, prospective homeowners who find it nearly impossible to build a future here in Hawai'i. According to DBEDT's 2024 report on Demographic, Social, and Economic Characteristics of Hawai'i's Race Groups, around 62 percent of Native Hawaiians in Hawai'i are employed, yet they earn significantly less than other major race groups in the state, with medium annual earnings falling below \$40,000 for full-time, year-round work.

HB739 seeks to address this housing crisis by establishing and funding the Kamaaina Homes Program. This program would assist counties through the dwelling unit revolving fund to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners. These deed restrictions would ensure that homes remain attainable for local and Native Hawaiian families that contribute to the local workforce while preserving community stability. This bill is an innovative solution that prioritizes residents first and foremost.

This measure establishes housing solutions to keep local and Native Hawaiian workers, particularly essential workers, in Hawai'i. This initiative provides critical support to ensure that workers who contribute to our community have access to housing in Hawai'i. Prioritizing initiatives to address inequalities in housing accessibility creates economic stability for Hawai'i's workforce and fosters community development for future generations residing in Hawai'i. For these reasons, we humbly ask that you **PASS HB739**.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Madelyn McKeague

Director of Advocacy, CNHA



TITLE GUARANTY
HAWAII

March 11, 2025

Testimony in support of HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Committee Members,

We write in support of HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing, which would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program to place voluntary deed restrictions on homes that will be dedicated for local working residents.

Title Guaranty of Hawai'i is the oldest and largest title company in the state. We have been owned and operated by a kama'āina family since 1896 and we are proud to employ over 250 residents who work in our branches across the state. As an organization that has worked for over a century to help connect local families with housing, we see firsthand the economic shift that is preventing local families from achieving the dream of homeownership.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an innovative proposal to create a new pool of residential real estate that is restricted to local residents. This will enable locals to get into Hawaii's tight housing market by restricting housing stock for local families and promoting a local workforce. This program is offering property sellers and buyers incentives in exchange for voluntarily placing a deed restriction on their property that restricts the types of future buyers and/or tenants to Hawai'i residents. The proposal accomplishes this by tying the voluntary deed restriction to residency and work requirements. It enables locals to compete with mainland buyers when buying a home and it also encourage property owners to rent to locals long term instead of leaving homes vacant.

HB 739 HD2 is an original solution that invests in our community and in culture, and I hope that you support this effort to keep local residents in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Mike B. Pietsch
President and Chief Operating Officer
Title Guaranty of Hawai'i





March 11, 2025

Committee: Senate Committee on Housing
Bill Number: HB739 HD2, Relating to Housing
Hearing Date and Time: March 11, 2025, 1:10pm
Re: Testimony of HPM Building Supply in Support

Dear Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Committee Members:

I would like to submit this testimony in support of HB739 HD2, Relating to Housing. The purpose of HB739 HD2 is to create a dedicated local housing market through the establishment of the Kama'āina Homes Program.

HPM Building Supply is a 100% employee-owned company serving Hawaii's home improvement market and building industry for over 100 years since 1921. With 18 locations across Hawai'i and Washington State, HPM offers various services and products, including retail stores, building supply and lumber yards, home design centers, drafting and design services, and manufacturing facilities. HPM is dedicated to enhancing homes, improving lives, and transforming communities.

A significant portion of our workforce consists of skilled tradespeople like carpenters, electricians, and plumbers, all of whom are integral to the construction process. However, as housing prices rise and rental prices soar, these workers are forced to leave the state in search of more affordable living situations. The result is a shortage of skilled labor in the construction sector, leading to delays and higher costs for homeowners and developers alike. The Kama'āina Homes Program offers a solution to this by ensuring that local workers have a place to live in the same communities where they work.

HB 739 HD2's approach—creating deed-restricted housing dedicated to local working residents—will help stabilize the housing market by giving local workers a fighting chance in a competitive market in which wealthier non-residents often have an advantage. With more local residents able to afford homes and stay in the state we will have a stronger, more sustainable construction industry that benefits everyone, from homeowners to contractors and beyond.

I ask for your support of HB739 HD2, as it provides the foundation for a more robust, locally employed, and efficient building industry that will meet the needs of Hawaii's growing population.

Sincerely,

Jason Fujimoto
Chairman & CEO





**Testimony to
House Committee on Finance
March 11, 2025
1:10 PM
Conference Room 225 & VIA videoconference
Hawai'i State Capitol
HB 739 HD2**

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

We write in support of HB 739 HD2. This bill will increase our housing supply for local working families in Hawai'i.

Established in 1904, Hawai'i Gas serves over 70,000 customers on all islands through its utility pipeline infrastructure and propane business, all of whom depend on the company for sustainable, reliable, and affordable gas for water heating, cooking, drying, and other commercial and industrial applications. The company employs some 350 professionals, over 75% of whom are under collective bargaining.

The stability of our local workforce is directly tied to the ability of local families to live and work in Hawai'i. Housing instability has a direct impact on the workforce's ability to remain in the state and to continue supporting the essential infrastructure that allows businesses like ours to thrive and serve the public.

Our company relies on a dedicated workforce of technicians, engineers, and support staff who ensure that the gas services we provide are safe, reliable, and accessible to all residents. However, the rising cost of housing makes it increasingly difficult for these essential workers to remain in the state. The Kama'āina Homes Program offers a meaningful solution by ensuring that local families can secure housing in their communities, thereby providing a stable and skilled workforce that is essential to industries like ours.

HB 739 HD2 addresses long-term workforce sustainability, ensuring that employees who work in critical infrastructure sectors like energy can stay in Hawai'i and continue their work without the constant threat of displacement. It is a smart, forward-thinking solution that will benefit all sectors of our economy.

We urge you to support HB 739 HD2, as it represents an investment in Hawai'i's workforce, infrastructure, and long-term prosperity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Statement of
Meli James and Brittany Heyd
Cofounders
Mana Up

HB739 HD2, Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Committee Members,

We support HB739 HD2, which establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program to provide voluntary deed restrictions to willing eligible homeowners and homebuyers who agree to limit the use of their property for local working occupants.

Mana Up is a statewide initiative that helps provide entrepreneurs in Hawai'i with the resources and tools to grow their business and scale globally. As these entrepreneurs continue to grow, they also help contribute to our expanding our local economy. As part of our mission, we aim to sustain the local economy through economic diversification, local job creation, community giveback, investment, and a regenerative culture of entrepreneurship – providing a better future for generations to come here in Hawai'i. To keep these types of entrepreneurs in Hawai'i and even expand our entrepreneurial ecosystem, though, these entrepreneurs need a place to live that they can afford.

We repeatedly hear from our entrepreneurs about the difficulty they have in finding attainable housing that provides them the safety and security necessary to focus on their business and family. Local entrepreneurs want to create and expand their business in Hawai'i, but far too often feel that opportunities for housing and business are better on the continent.

Creating a dedicated housing stock for our local workforce will help our families have security as they navigate the difficult economic conditions that face the State. The Kama'āina Homes Program incentivizes local homeowners and buyers to voluntarily be a part of the solution to create a permanent dedicated housing stock for local families. Housing is a challenge for everyone, and by coming together, we can find shared solutions that help all the people of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Meli James | Cofounder, Mana Up
Brittany Heyd | Cofounder, Mana Up

TORI RICHARD

March 11, 2025

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

We write in support HB 739 HD2 and the creation of the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Tori Richard has manufactured in Honolulu for nearly 70 years, and we continue to proudly do so today. As a long-time medium-sized Hawai'i employer, we recognize the challenge high housing costs pose to everyone working to make ends meet in Hawai'i.

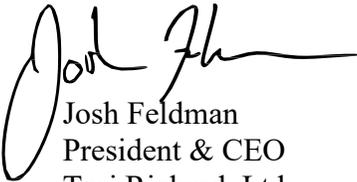
Our business is deeply committed to supporting Hawaii's local workforce, but the growing housing crisis makes it increasingly difficult for our employees to remain in the islands. Attainable housing is key to keeping talented, creative people in Hawai'i, and this bill offers a much-needed solution to that challenge.

Many of our employees are struggling to find attainable places to live. As their employer, I see firsthand the impact this has on their lives. When workers are forced to move away or leave the state altogether, it hurts our ability to operate and expand. The Kama'āina Homes Program ensures that local workers, like those in the fashion, manufacturing, and retail industries, have a place to call home. This stability will allow them to continue contributing to Hawai'i's vibrant economy and support local businesses.

Moreover, as a company that takes pride in being part of the local community, we understand the importance of preserving Hawaii's unique cultural identity. The housing crisis threatens that identity, as local residents are pushed out by non-resident investors and wealthy buyers. HB 739 HD2 will help reverse this trend by providing a steady supply of attainable homes dedicated to local residents, ensuring that our workforce and community remain strong and diverse.

I urge you to support HB 739 HD2, as it is essential to the future of our business and the local economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Josh Feldman
President & CEO
Tori Richard, Ltd.

1891 NORTH KING STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819



Testimony in Support of HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

We write in strong support of HB 739 HD2 which will establish the Kama'āina Homes Program allowing interested homeowners and homebuyers to voluntarily sell a deed restriction on their property that limit the occupancy of the property to our local workforce.

aio is a locally owned company with holdings across a broad range of industries. Our companies are purpose-driven and firmly rooted in local values. At aio, Hawai'i is at our core, and through our products and services, we work hard to make Hawai'i a better place for future generations.

Hawai'i is in the midst of a housing crisis. Our employees are our greatest asset, and we want to ensure that they have access to quality and attainable housing. This program is a good first step at establishing a housing market that is dedicated to local working families rather than out-of-state purchasers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 739 HD2.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brandon H. Kurisu".

Brandon Kurisu
aio Family of Companies



Committee: Senate Committee on Housing
Bill Number: HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing
Hearing Date and Time: March 11, 2025, 1:10pm (Room 225)

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and members of the committee:

I write today in **strong support of HB 739 HD2**, Relating to Housing.

It is rare to be at a local gathering nowadays and not hear someone comment that they, or their family member or friend, are considering moving to the continent because they were unable to find housing in Hawai'i. This outmigration has become the norm, and it is affecting all aspects of our community. We are watching 'ohana separated from one another. Key community roles and jobs are left vacant as teachers, first responders, care workers, service staff are seeking financial security away from Hawai'i. And our next generations are opting for new places to call home because they know that they will never be able to afford a place to call their own in Hawai'i when wealthy interests from outside the state are able to outbid them in the open market.

The Kama'āina Homes Program lays a framework to mitigate this housing and cultural crisis. This a voluntary initiative inspired by successful models from other regions. It offers a much-needed solution by ensuring that housing is dedicated specifically to local residents, without considering income levels. This means the program focuses on keeping housing within reach for Hawai'i families who are working and living here, supporting our residents in staying rooted in the communities they call home.

Given the housing crisis we continue to face, this program is an investment in our future—both economically and culturally. It creates long-term restrictions on properties, requiring that they be occupied by those who live and work in Hawai'i, which helps to prevent housing from being priced out of reach for local families. With rising costs and the constant threat of our own residents being displaced, this program ensures that our communities will remain intact, and that local workers and families will not be forced to leave for lack of affordable options.

Hawai'i is a special place, with a unique culture and way of life that depend on the strength and stability of our local communities. By supporting the Kama'āina Homes Program, you would be taking a decisive step toward securing that future—ensuring that future generations of Hawai'i residents can live and thrive in the islands they call home.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Sunshine Topping



LATE

HIPHI Board

May Okiihiro, MD, MS
Chair
John A. Burns School of Medicine,
Department of Pediatrics
Titiimaea Ta'ase, JD
Secretary
State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender
Carissa Holley, MEd
Treasurer
Hale Makua Health Services

Debbie Erskine
ARCH-MEPS Consulting LLC, Owner

Camonia Graham - Tutt, PhD
University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Jennifer José Lo, MD
Hawai'i Health Partners

Misty Pacheco, DrPH
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Justin Puckett, CPA, MBA
Humana

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP
Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD
Medical-Legal Partnership
For Children in Hawai'i

Garret Sugai
HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH
John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native
Hawaiian Research Office

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 10, 2025

To: Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Housing

RE: Support for HB 739 HD2, Relating to Housing

Hrg: Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 1:10 PM, Conference Room 225

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ supports **HB 739 HD2**, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

Access to housing is a critical component of public health. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services's Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, there are several aspects to housing that impact health, including affordability, stability, quality and safety, and surrounding neighborhood.²

Hawai'i Housing Concerns

A minimum wage employee in our state must work 98 hours per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment at fair market value.³ A two-bedroom housing wage for the islands is \$44.60, which amounts to \$92,768 per year.

Yet, housing costs are continuing to soar. Data released this month from the Honolulu Board of Realtors showed that O'ahu single-family home prices in February hit a record high, with the new median price of \$1,185,000 rising 10.2% from \$1,075,000 a year ago.

Despite recent efforts to address rising housing costs, these numbers indicate that housing remains a serious concern for our state's residents.

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.
²<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/quality-housing>
³<https://nlihc.org/oor/state/hi>



An Innovative Approach

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), the resort town of Vail, Colorado, an international visitor destination, has limited housing capacity within its boundaries and has long struggled to maintain a supply of affordable housing for its permanent residents.⁴

To address its housing problem, Vail implemented the Vail InDEED program, which allows the town to purchase deed restrictions from homeowners and developers to permanently limit the occupancy of a given unit to individuals employed in the surrounding Eagle County area. At considerably less than full development cost, the program has obtained deed restrictions on dozens of residences and won the Urban Land Institute's Robert C. Larson Housing Policy Leadership Award in 2020.⁵

A deed restriction, also called a restrictive covenant, is a condition attached to the deed of a property. As a major tourist destination with limited developable land, Vail has used deed restrictions extensively. According to OPDR, "The deed-restricted housing must be occupied by a household that contains at least one 'qualified resident,' a person who works at least 30 hours per week in an Eagle County business. The property's owner may be the qualified resident or rent to the resident. The agreement is in force in perpetuity and follows the property even if it is sold to a new owner, inherited, or given away."

Program Benefits

Vail's InDEED program has several benefits that would also apply to our state. When Vail purchases deed restrictions at between 15% and 20% of a given property's fair market value, the town gains a workforce housing unit that it need not develop, manage, or maintain. Because Vail merely changes the covenants of a deed, the city does not need to adopt an ordinance to increase zoning density or wrestle with "not-in-my-back-yard" sentiments.

Additionally, property owners are given a substantial payout without having to actually sell their property, which has led to an increase in owner-occupancy rates throughout Eagle County.⁶ Finally, while the agreements made under the Vail InDEED program do not limit the resale price or rent that the owner may seek, the program's occupancy requirement reduces the market of buyers by linking housing prices to local wages, which insulates locals from competition with wealthier buyers and renters.

Therefore, we urge you to pass this measure to adopt a creative solution to our state's housing crisis.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nate Hix", written in a cursive style.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

⁴ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/casestudies/study-081121.html>

⁵ <https://americas.uli.org/robert-c-larson-awards-2020-vail>

⁶ <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/casestudies/study-081121.html>

March 11, 2025

TO: Chair Chang and Members of the Senate Housing Committee
RE: HB 739, HD2 RELATING TO HOUSING.

LATE

Dear Chair Chang and Committee Members,

Housing Hawai'i's Future is a nonprofit dedicated to creating opportunities for Hawai'i's next generation by ending the workforce housing shortage.

We support the establishment of the Kamaaina Homes Program through HB 739, HD2.

The Kamaaina Homes Program is modeled on a similar program in Vail, Colorado. Like many of Hawai'i's communities, Vail is heavily reliant on tourism. Furthermore, tourism has adversely impacted their locality's supply of affordable housing. The housing shortage leads to a workforce shortage. As HHF concluded in our sixth policy brief, the Vail InDeed model is uniquely tailored to Hawai'i's housing constraints.¹

Deed restrictions can preserve local housing supply. By purchasing deed restrictions from homeowners, county governments can ensure deed-restricted homes remain permanently affordable for residents.

Under this program, residents who work at least thirty hours per week in the community, or who meet another set condition, are eligible to live in these deed-restricted homes. This program will foster a new, permanent affordable housing market for working residents.

We are grateful for your careful consideration of HB 739, HD2.

Thank you,



Lee Wang
Executive Director
Housing Hawai'i's Future
lee@hawaiisfuture.org



Perry Arrasmith
Director of Policy
Housing Hawai'i's Future
perry@hawaiisfuture.org

¹ Housing Hawai'i's Future. "Policy Brief #6: Deed Restrictions in Maui County." 2024.
<https://www.hawaiisfuture.org/resources/policy-brief-mau-deed-restrictions>.



LATE

The House Committee on Housing

Hearing: Tuesday, March 11th, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB739 HD2: RELATING TO HOUSING

The Hawaii State Youth Commission (HiYC) was established to “advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the state.” We are writing in support of HB739.

Kama‘āina today face a significant housing crisis. On O‘ahu, the median home selling price is \$750,000, with Maui experiencing prices exceeding this amount. Between 2019 and 2023, the median income for local households was \$104,000. Housing prices have been rising exponentially, and without a steady income to keep pace, local workers are forced to purchase homes by taking out high-interest loans or, in many cases, moving out of state. As such, out-migration has been on the rise on a disproportionate scale, further weakening the local workforce.

Establishing the Kama‘āina Homes Program would provide necessary relief to local residents and expand homeownership opportunities for Kama‘āina under deed restrictions. The deed restrictions within the program would limit out-of-state investors’ and prospective buyers’ ability to purchase property in the future. Instead of heading toward a lucrative real estate market supported by out-of-state buyers, the government should seek to remedy the Kama‘āina who have worked on these islands for generations and are in desperate need of housing. Moreover, HB739 enables municipalities to offer secured loans and financial aid to lower-income residents.

Most importantly, this program would have long-term benefits for local workers and families. The pressing housing crisis undeniably affects the youth today, and thus, the issues it entails involve our current youth. We urge the government to implement programs to make the housing market more stable and less speculative. By focusing on local residents, HB739 provides a practical and sustainable path for Hawaii’s housing market in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony in support of this vital bill.

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission

hawaiistateyc@gmail.com



LATE

March 10, 2025

Support for HB739 HD2 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee

My name is **Rob Nobriga, President and CEO of Tradewind Group**, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD2** and the establishment of the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Hawai'i's housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama'āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai'i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents. Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai'i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. The Kama'āina Homes Program would create a dedicated housing inventory for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It's an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support Hawai'i's housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Rob Nobriga
rnobriga@tradewindgrp.com

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 5:32:14 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Testifying for Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB739 HD2



Testimony of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties

H.B. No. 739 HD2 - Support

Relating to Housing

Committee on Housing

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 1:10 p.m.

LATE

The Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of HB 739 HD2, with a requested amendment to clarify that counties may use a portion of the program's funding to cover administrative costs,

HSAC is a non-profit organization representing Hawai'i's four counties: Kaua'i, Maui, Hawai'i, and the City & County of Honolulu. HSAC's membership includes all county council members, who collaborate to advocate for policies that enhance the quality of life for our residents.

This measure establishes the Kama'āina Homes Program, which provides counties with funding to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. With Hawai'i's housing crisis forcing many working families to leave the state, this initiative is a proactive step to ensure local families can continue to live and work in their communities.

HB739 HD2 provides counties with a critical tool to ensure that a portion of our existing housing stock remains available to:

- **Help retain our workforce** by ensuring that essential workers, including teachers, healthcare providers, first responders, and other community members, have access to stable housing.
- **Stabilize neighborhoods** by preventing speculative investment and maintaining housing for full-time residents.
- **Support county-led housing initiatives** by providing additional resources and flexibility for each county to tailor the program to meet its specific housing needs.

Furthermore, we urge the Legislature to clarify that counties may use a portion of the program's funding to cover administrative costs, as the successful implementation of this initiative will require dedicated county resources for monitoring and enforcement. HSAC supports this measure and urges its passage to help ensure that our residents can continue to afford to live and work in the communities they serve.

March 11, 2025

Senator Stanley Chang
Senator Troy N. Hashimoto
Senate Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813



**RE: HEARING OF MARCH 11, 2025; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 739 HD2
RELATING TO HOUSING**

Dear Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support** of HB739 HD2, Relating to Housing. This bill would establish the Kama'āina Homes Program. In the face of our state's ongoing housing needs, this program represents a critical investment in the future of Hawai'i—both in terms of our economy and our cultural heritage.

Kobayashi Group is a company deeply rooted in Hawai'i, understanding the unique values and priorities of our island communities. We take great care to honor those values in everything we do, applying our skills and expertise to meet the needs of a diverse population.

We support the opportunity to secure a long-term inventory of homes not restricted from the important ability to grow equity, but creates a voluntary program to keep these homes for Kama'āina families, which is an innovative approach that has worked in other cities.

Sincerely,

Alana Kobayashi Pakkala
CEO + Partner



Aloha e Representatives, Chair, Vice Chair:

Comments to HB739/SB490

We are testifying on behalf of Locals In My Backyard (LIMBY) Hawai'i. LIMBY Hawai'i is a hui of concerned kama'āina and kānaka advocating for solutions to our state's housing crisis.

We are concerned that NIMBYism has driven up costs and driven our friends and families out by opposing all development. We are equally concerned that the apparent answer to this, YIMBYism, insists that anything resembling true affordability is impossible and promotes building housing that gets bought by overseas investors. ***We won't solve our housing woes without building more, but we won't solve them by simply building more.***

The true solution is to create a housing market for locals: one that houses locals first, is tied to local wages, and is managed in trust. We detail real solutions to our housing woes on our website and through our newsletter.

The future for kama'āina and kānaka will be LIMBY or Las Vegas.

Deed restricted affordability purchased by the counties are a viable mechanism for perpetually affordable housing for local families and workers. This bill to that extent represents a step in the right direction. However, the bill contains a fairly hands off approach that may limit its impact.

We offer comments and amendments. To better leverage this bill's potential and the public's investment in these units, the bill should be amended to:

- allow counties to define qualified businesses and maintain a list of approved businesses
- require that participants in this scheme pre-register with the county and that such registration be subject to residency and annual renewal and that eligibility be at least partially based on time spent on this list
- require that applicants not own other real property nor substantial holdings in company whose sole or primary purpose is the management, ownership, or development of real property
- wealth limits to insure these homes are going to actual kama'aina
- limits on the amount gifted to the buyer for closing costs or downpayment from non-state programs or individuals

- requirements that any other publicly funded or charitable gifts covering the downpayment or closing costs be added to the value of the affordability easement further increasing affordability in event unit is resold
- resale limits tied to local incomes
- more stringent penalties for violation of the deeded restriction

These will limit abuse of the program and better direct it towards the local working class. Funds will doubtless be limited for this program. It is therefore critical that those funds go towards long suffering locals. These amendments will achieve that.

Pre-registration side steps the otherwise very loose requirements for “residency”. There is little more required to be a resident than to have an address here: which can be accomplished before one even arrives in Hawai‘i.

Annual renewal with a seniority criteria gives our keiki an advantage as they could register at 18, attend college, return home, and begin saving for a home all while moving up to the front of the line. This would allow them to be first in line above someone who had just arrived with the funds to purchase a home.

We believe the program outlined here is best understood as a way for local families to put down permanent roots. It should not be a rental program—indeed the ability to rent the property would seem to contradict some of the other requirements of this bill.

To that end, if the property is going to be rented, there should be a cap on how much rent could be charged as a percentage of local incomes: rents should not exceed 100% of AMI. This would ensure that the property would continue to pay it forward as lower rents would enable local families to save for an eventual home of their own.

This would also account for the fact that local incomes are skewed higher by those working multiple jobs and as remote work has exploded.

However, properly understood this is a **homeownership** program. Not one for landlords. It thus makes little sense to subsidize landlords purchasing units via a program intended for homeownership. Thus it would be better that this property require an **owner-occupant** status. If the owner—living on the property—wishes to sublet a portion of the property under those terms that would be their own affair.

As written the requirement that only a single-tenant on the property be working at a qualified local business is particularly onerous. It would allow for arrangements with exorbitant rents so long as a single tenant works at a local company. This does nothing for housing affordability.

In a similar vein, there should be restrictions on ownership of real property by participants in this program. This should be for locals who want a place to live, not investors who want a home and a rental unit. Thus the program should require, via affidavit or other measure, that they attest to no ownership of other real property.

Finally, our affordable home programs have an unfortunate tendency to flow units towards the wealthy. This is often done under the auspices of a “low-income” family member purchasing a unit with gifted funds. No one doubts their right to a home, however, members of the public whose family members can gift them a home are not who this program is best intended for and are certainly in less imminent danger of moving to the CONUS due to housing costs.

We believe then limits on these gifted funds for closing costs or the downpayment should be limited. However, this need not include grant funds administered by other government or charitable institutions that would allow stacking and an increase in the overall affordability of the unit.

Resale limits that tie this property to local income increases are similarly necessary. This is a public investment in property and we should exercise that option to the fullest extent. It should not be seen as a vehicle for private profit born on the backs of locals leaving and investors buying in.

Finally our housing crisis is dire. We should not tolerate abuse of this program and the penalties for abuse of public funds sorely needed for affordable housing should be more stringent.

As written this bill introduces some good ideas, but as written this bill will likely just mean that home prices go up. All it does is subsidize landlords with grants, thus meaning they can bid higher, while retaining no requirement for meaningful affordability. While the kernel of the bill is strong—deed restrictions—insufficient thought has been put into how to make that device achieve what lawmakers actually want: which is affordable housing.

We urge the committee to either make these substantive amendments or drop the bill and try again next year.

Me ka ha’aha’a
Makana Hicks-Goo,
Organizer on behalf of LIMBY Hawai‘i

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: CONVEYANCE; Kamaaina Homes Program; Voluntary Deed Restrictions

BILL NUMBER: HB 739 HD 2

INTRODUCED BY: House Committee on Finance

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new subpart to chapter 201H, Part III, HRS establishing the Kamaaina Homes Program (“Program”) within the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (“HHFDC”).

The Program allows the purchase of voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or buyers, to be funded through the dwelling unit revolving fund established pursuant to section 201H-191, HRS. Upon application of the county, HHFDC may allocate an annual lump sum necessary for a county to purchase a voluntary deed restriction from an eligible homeowner or homebuyer.

Definitions provided for “eligible homeowner or homebuyer” and “qualified business”.

New section 201H-C, HRS, states that the deed restriction shall run with the land in perpetuity, binding all future owners, successors and assigns.

New section 201H-E, HRS, provides property with a deed restriction shall be exempt from the following with conforming amendments made to: (a) Chapter 343 Environmental impact statements; (b) Chapter 247 Conveyance tax; and (c) Chapter 103D Hawaii procurement code.

Makes conforming amendments to section 201H-191(a), HRS, relating to the dwelling unit revolving fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 3000.

STAFF COMMENTS: The program proposed by this bill proposes to allow counties to buy an easement over property that would restrict future use of the property in a way that presumably would make it unattractive to or unusable for vacation home or second home use, and thus would rein in housing costs for those eligible to live in the property.

Digested: 3/8/2025



 808-733-7060

 808-737-4977

 1259 A'ala Street, Suite 300
Honolulu, HI 96817

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair

Senate Committee on Housing

State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 739, HD2, Relating to Housing

HEARING: Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 1:10 p.m.

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the 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 739, HD2, which establishes the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers. Effective 7/1/3000.

Hawai'i REALTORS® supports the creation of more workforce housing for Hawaii residents. We do however have concerns that the deed restrictions contained in this measure are in perpetuity. Having deed restrictions on a property in perpetuity can be problematic especially in land use planning, as communities can change and uses for a property may need to change as well over time. We respectfully suggest that the deed restrictions be amortized over 10 years but are open to other proposals for alternative timeframes. We look forward to further discussions on this matter.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:48:39 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelle Condry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michelle Condry, and I am testifying in strong support of HB739 HD2 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave – many of my friends and family have relocated to the continent, stating that they simply can no longer afford to live in Hawai‘i.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Michelle Condry

mhscondry@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:59:51 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

GREAT IDEA!!! MAHALO!

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:41:45 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sam Dorios	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sam Dorios and I am writing in **strong support of HB 739 HD2**, which seeks to address the urgent and persistent housing crisis in Hawai‘i. As someone who has spent nearly a decade working on systems mapping for the Hawai‘i Leadership Forum, I have seen firsthand how deeply intertwined housing is with nearly every major challenge our state faces. Whether in mapping issues related to ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families, health disparities, education, or economic stability, housing emerges time and time again as a fundamental barrier to progress.

The breadth of the crisis is staggering. Across numerous projects, regardless of focus, the lack of affordable and accessible housing repeatedly surfaces as a core driver of social and economic distress. It affects individuals and families at all income levels, from those struggling to make ends meet to those who, on paper, should have the means to live comfortably in Hawai‘i but find themselves increasingly burdened by housing costs.

I would also like to highlight the depth of this crisis by sharing a personal story. My wife and I are both professionals—I have a stable career in Hawai‘i, and she is a tenured professor at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. We are frugal, carry no debt, and have managed to save a reasonable amount over the years. Yet, we have had serious discussions about whether we can afford to stay in Hawai‘i specifically due to the high cost of housing. We are not alone in this struggle. We know other professionals, similarly situated, who have made the difficult decision to leave the state because they simply could not justify the cost of staying. If those of us with financial stability are grappling with this decision, I can only imagine how much more devastating the situation is for families with fewer resources.

This bill is not just about housing—it is about the future of Hawai‘i. It is about ensuring that local families, workers, and businesses can continue to thrive here without being priced out of their own communities. It is about retaining our workforce, strengthening our economy, and preserving the cultural and social fabric that makes Hawai‘i unique.

I urge you to pass HB 739 HD2 and take a decisive step toward addressing this ongoing crisis. Mahalo for your time and for the opportunity to testify.

- Sam Dorios

samdorios@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:42:06 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Godbey Carson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this Kama'aina Homes Deed program. It offers another helpful and effective approach to making our islands for affordable for our residents.

Ellen Carson

Honolulu, Hawaii

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:52:24 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and members of the committee,

My name is Will Caron and I am a resident of Kahalu‘u, on O‘ahu's windward side, where I was born and raised. I am currently a renter, and despite having a secure, relatively well-paying job, rent still takes up approximately 30 percent of my annual income after taxes, putting me right on the edge of being cost burdened. Many of my neighbors pay a much higher portion of their income on housing costs.

As you know, the housing crisis is the number one driver of displacement of local families and houselessness. Something must be done to reduce housing costs, which is why I am so glad to see the legislature advancing innovative solutions this session.

I am writing here in strong support of one of those solutions: HB739 HD2, which would establish the Kama‘āina Homes Deed Restriction Program to create a protected market of housing specifically for Hawai‘i workforce residents.

This innovative program addresses a core driver of Hawai‘i's housing crisis: the competition between local families and outside investors that has made home prices completely disconnected from local incomes.

- Only 20 percent of Hawai‘i residents can afford a median-priced home.
- Outside buyers spend on average 46 percent more than local residents on home purchases.
- Median housing costs are 2.7 times the national level.
- Housing costs has been cited as the primary reason for locals leaving Hawai‘i, with a mass exodus of thousands of local families leaving.

Many longtime local landowners want to preserve housing for locals, yet face increasing financial pressure to sell to outside investors. The Kama‘āina Homes program offers a practical solution providing grants to property owners who place deed restrictions on their homes, ensuring future sales/rentals to local working residents.

The program is modeled after successful deed restriction initiatives in other high-cost regions like Vail, Colorado's InDEED program and Aspen, Colorado's workforce deed restriction

By separating our local housing market from the global investment market, we can begin to address the massive gap between local incomes and housing costs that is forcing families to leave Hawai'i.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to create housing stability for Hawai'i's families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 11:28:38 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth Gilbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

My name is Kenneth Gilbert and I am in support of HB739 HD2 to establish the Kama'aina Homes Program. I have lives in Hawaii for 50 years. My wife is 4th generation in Hawaii, our kids are 5th generation! We need to support local families and provide them with viable opportunities to own their properties and provide real estate inventory that will be in fact be available to them for purchase. This legislation and future initiatives that support these types of efforts for our Kama'aina families is essential and supports the long lasting values of our Aloha State.

Please take the necessary steps to pass HB739 HD2.

Mahalo.

Kenneth Gilbert

ken@bcrhawaii.com

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 11:48:32 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thomas Brandt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Senate Committee on Housing
RE: **Strong Support HB739 HD2**

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference
Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 1:10PM

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and members of the committee:

I am writing in **strong support of HB739 HD2**, which would establish the Kama'āina Homes Deed Restriction Program to create a protected market of housing specifically for Hawaii workforce residents.

This innovative program addresses a core driver of Hawaii's housing crisis: the competition between local families and outside investors that has made home prices completely disconnected from local incomes.

- Only 20% of Hawaii residents can afford a median-priced home
- Outside buyers spend on average 46% more than local residents on home purchases
- Median housing costs are 2.7 times the national level
- Housing costs has been cited as the primary reason for locals leaving Hawaii, with a mass exodus of thousands of local families leaving

Many longtime local landowners want to preserve housing for locals, yet face increasing financial pressure to sell to outside investors. The Kama'āina Homes program offers a practical solution providing grants to property owners who place deed restrictions on their homes, ensuring future sales/rentals to local working residents.

The program is modeled after successful deed restriction initiatives in other high-cost regions like Vail, Colorado's InDEED program and Aspen, Colorado's workforce deed restriction

By separating our local housing market from the global investment market, we can begin to address the massive gap between local incomes and housing costs that is forcing families to leave Hawaii.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to create housing stability for Hawaii's families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:49:16 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Josh Levinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD2 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Josh Levinson, and I am testifying in support of HB739 HD2 and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis has made it nearly impossible for local families to secure attainable housing, forcing many to leave the islands. Unlike on the continent, where people can move to more affordable regions within the same state, the high cost of housing in Hawai‘i leaves residents with no option but to leave the state entirely. This displacement separates families, erodes our culture, and turns Hawai‘i into a place that only the wealthiest residents and non-residents can afford to call home.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is a bold and innovative approach to preserving housing for local residents. By empowering counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions, this program ensures that homes remain accessible to local working families. It provides a critical tool to prevent housing from being lost to non-resident buyers and short-term vacation rentals, strengthening the fabric of our communities.

This program is an investment in Hawai‘i’s future. By helping local families stay here, we can build stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and create a more sustainable economy. I urge the Senate Committee on Housing to pass HB739 HD2 and to continue exploring innovative solutions to Hawai‘i’s housing crisis.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Josh Levinson
jplevinson@gmail.com

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:42:10 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joy Barua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and members of the Senate Housing committee:

I fully support HB739 to establish and fund the Kama'āina Homes Program as proposed by Holomua Collaborative in its testimony.

Hawaii's housing crisis continues to spiral, impacting our island families and communities. I hold in high regard, the efforts of our policymakers and legislators to address the issue in collaboration with multi-sector stakeholders.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an innovative effort that is grounded on tried-and-true practice - an income-blind, voluntary initiative, based on programs successfully deployed in other jurisdictions. It would create a dedicated housing supply for local residents by empowering the Counties to purchase perpetual deed restrictions on properties that require occupants to live and work in Hawaii.

The Program is an investment in our future focused on keeping local families at home and creating stronger communities, reducing out-migration, and building a more sustainable economy. It is an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge you to support the Kama'āina Homes Program.

Mahalo nui loa,

Joy Barua

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:08:14 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Yamagata	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB739 which seeks to establish the Kama‘āina Homes Program to create a dedicated housing supply for local residents. As a lifelong resident of Hawai‘i, I have witnessed firsthand how our housing market has become increasingly out of reach for local families, forcing many of my friends to leave the islands in search of affordability elsewhere.

In 2021, my husband and I were in the market to purchase our first home together. We were financially prepared, pre-approved and ready to make offers. However, time and time again, we lost out to buyers offering \$50,000 to \$100,000 over asking price—often with all-cash offers. The experience was devastating. We were not looking for luxury, just a modest home with two bathrooms and a reasonable commute so we could continue raising our children in the place we call home. It became clear that many of the buyers we were competing against were not in the same boat as us—a local family simply trying to put down roots.

The reality is, if our circumstances had allowed us to move to the mainland for a more affordable community, we likely would have. And while we have done everything possible to make it work here, I worry about what the future holds for our children. If the housing market continues on this trajectory, I do not see how they—or their generation—will be able to afford to stay in Hawai‘i.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is a necessary step toward addressing this crisis. Similar programs have been successfully implemented in other tourism-dependent communities on the mainland, ensuring that local residents are prioritized and have a real chance at homeownership. There is no reason we cannot do the same here in Hawai‘i.

I urge you to pass this bill and take action to protect the future of local families. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Yamagata and Nolan Hong

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:44:28 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandy Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto and Members of the Senate House Committee,

I support HB739, HD2, establishing the Kamaaina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers. This program will:

1. help to preserve Hawai'i's communities by ensuring housing remains available for local working families.
2. create a dedicated housing supply for local residents.
3. create a secondary market for housing just for local residents, which will reduce the cost of housing over time.
4. make housing available to local residents working for local employers.

With Hawaii's high home prices, we must adopt innovative ways to ensure that local families may be able to afford homes to remain in Hawaii.

I respectfully ask you to pass HB739, HD2 out of your Committee. Mahalo!

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:03:50 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglass Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB739 HD2, which establishes the Kama'aina Homes Program to provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowners or homebuyers.

This innovative program creates a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions require that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

This program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It's an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I encourage the Committee to move this measure to the Committee on Ways and Means with a favorable recommendation for eventual passage by the Senate.

very respectfully

Douglass Adams

Hilo

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:41:08 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support** of HB 739 (HD 2).

I have been a Hawai'i resident my whole life, and for the past few years, I've been anxious about our state's future. While I have decided to stay in Hawai'i to raise my family (at least for now), I have many close family members, friends, and neighbors who decided to move away due to the high cost of living.

Our state, unfortunately, takes the nation's top spot for a number of unaffordability metrics:

- Most expensive single-family houses
- Highest residential rental rates
- Highest living wage
- Lowest millennial homeownership rate

This high cost of living has resulted in a few alarming population trends:

- Net outmigration for every year since 2017
- Hawai'i residents are having fewer children and later in life
- Hawai'i's population is aging rapidly

Such population issues are already having an adverse effect on our economy as there are not enough workers to keep businesses open and our tax base is shrinking. What will happen in the future? Will we be able to have enough workers to support a thriving and diversified economy? Would we have enough tax revenue to maintain our public infrastructure and social programs?

Additionally, we have a responsibility to our own people and communities. It's sad to know that, today, more native Hawaiians live outside Hawai'i than in it. Retaining our local residents is important to ensuring that we have vibrant communities where people come together to help each other out and address issues.

I believe the Kama'aina Homes Program has the potential to mitigate or reverse these trends. The program is a creative way to ensure that existing housing inventory in Hawai'i remains available for local residents. Through voluntary deed restrictions, local residents can be a part of the

housing solution through incentives. It is noteworthy that this deed restriction concept has a successful precursor in Vail, Colorado.

Let's do this for our future generations of Hawai'i residents.

Jordan Odo

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:05:59 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy agbayani	Testifying for Hawai'i friends of civil rights	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in duppoty og HB739 hd2

Amy Agbayani, co-chair Hawai'i Friends of Civil Rights

I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD2** and the establishment of the Kama'āina Homes Program.

The Kama'āina Homes Program plan to make more housing available for local residents. Too many local working class families use up huge percentage of their monthly income and are priced-out of houses and many leave our state. The Kama'āina Homes Program has restrictions that would prevent homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support housing for Hawai'i's families. Mahalo for your consideration and support.

Amy_Agbayani@yahoo.com

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:27:21 PM
Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adriann Gin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Adriann Gin**, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD2** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Adriann Gin
agin808@gmail.com

Date: March 11, 2025

To: Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senator Troy Hashimoto, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Housing

From: Early Childhood Action Strategy

Re: House Bill 739 HD2, Relating to Housing

LATE

Early Childhood Action Strategy (ECAS) is a statewide cross-sector collaborative designed to improve the system of care for Hawai'i's youngest children and their families. ECAS partners work to align priorities for children prenatal to age eight, streamline services, maximize resources, and improve programs to support our youngest keiki.

ECAS supports House Bill 739 HD2, which would establish Kama'āina Homes Program.

We are all aware that a limited housing inventory and highly inflated housing costs have continued to price local families out of their homes, causing them to flee the state in droves. Though it may not solve the problem in and of itself, the Kama'āina Homes Program can play a role in keeping families in Hawai'i by establishing a dedicated inventory for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. Coupled with a work declaration that requires both owners/occupants to have local employment, the program is geared to the prevention of homes being bought or sold to non-resident buyers for use as either long-term housing or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an investment in local families and the local workforce. The importance and benefits of a program of this nature cannot be overstated.

For this reason, Early Childhood Action Strategy supports House Bill 739 HD2.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

March 11, 2025

LATE

Support for HB739 HD2 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **[Name]**, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD2** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,

Scott LaRue

Pacific Energy Capital LLC

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:40:35 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mai Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support keeping local residents housed

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:29:57 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephany Vaioleti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of HB739 as another avenue for local families to be able to continue living in Hawaii. Our family has considered moving away and know at least 8 other families who have moved to Nevada, Utah, or Oregon due to the high cost of living and lack of affordable homes. This program would provide funding to the counties to purchase voluntary deed restrictions from eligible homeowner or homebuyers. We need multiple solutions to this very complex issue. I appreciate all the efforts to support our communities! Mahalo

March 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD2 – Relating to Housing



Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Holly Holowach, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD2** and the establishment of the **Kama'āina Homes Program**.

From 2000 through 2003, I was a director of US VETS for homeless veterans and from 2003 through 2020, I was the director of Weinberg Village Waimanalo which was a transitional housing program for homeless families. The number one reason why we have homeless people is lack of affordable housing. In 2003, when I would testify at the legislature for housing, no one knew what “affordable housing” was or how to create it. Now, thank goodness, the community has joined to make that happen. Now, we need to create the **Kama'āina Homes Program for local residents**.

As the housing boom flourished for those who could afford to buy or own, rental prices have skyrocketed. Everyone who rents has a terrible time trying to find appropriate housing for prices they can afford, squeezing out local families and the work force of every income bracket. This has resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai'i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. We must change this.

Hawai'i's housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—**but the Kama'āina Homes Program offers a solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai'i—home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.**

This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama'āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It's an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

I urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support Hawai'i's housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Holly Holowach

Kailua resident and renter since 1997

HollyHolowach@gmail.com

LATE

March 11, 2025

Support for HB739 HD2 – Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is LorMona Meredith, and I am testifying in **strong support of HB739 HD2** and the establishment of the Kama‘āina Homes Program.

Hawai‘i’s housing crisis is forcing local families to leave—but the Kama‘āina Homes Program offers a viable solution. The Program imagines a future where local families can stay in Hawai‘i, work and thrive where they live —home by home, neighborhood by neighborhood, by ensuring there is housing available just for local residents.

Skyrocketing home and rental prices have resulted in many local families struggling to secure places to live, pressuring local working families to leave Hawai‘i in search of attainable living options elsewhere. This Program would create a dedicated housing stock for local working families by empowering the counties to purchase voluntary and perpetual deed restrictions from homeowners and homebuyers. The restrictions would come with a requirement that both owner-occupants and renters of record work locally. This prevents homes from being lost to non-resident buyers or short-term vacation rentals.

The Kama‘āina Homes Program is an investment in our future. By keeping local families here, we create stronger communities, reduce out-migration, and build a more sustainable economy. It’s an opportunity to ensure that our islands remain vibrant, diverse, and truly home to those who cherish it most—our people.

As a long-time (Hawai‘i-born) resident and single parent living, working, and raising my kids in Hawai‘i over the past 20+ years, I know first-hand how challenging it is to find and retain affordable housing. I know if we don’t do something now, my children and children’s children will not be able to afford to live here in the next few years.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB739 HD2 to support Hawai‘i’s housing future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

LorMona Meredith

LATE

HB-739-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 4:17:12 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/11/2025 1:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika Riley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Honorable Member of the Committee,

As a kama‘āina parent and resident, I strongly support HB 739, Relating to Housing.

Speculation and other factors make it increasingly difficult for middle-income individuals and families who love Hawai‘i to stay in Hawai‘i. Our state should use all the reasonable tools available to address the housing crisis, and this is clearly one of them. Among other qualities, this bill may help local families stay in Hawai‘i without compromising our historic preservation laws, Native Hawaiian rights and access to cultural resources, or infrastructure.

Please advance HB 739, Relating to Housing.

Kāwika Riley

Kaimukī, O‘ahu