



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third State Legislature, 2025 Regular Session

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

By:

Michelle D. Acosta
Deputy Chief Court Administrator
District Court of the First Circuit

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Concurrent Resolution No. 158, H.D. 1

Purpose: REQUESTING THE JUDICIARY TO CONVENE A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP LANDLORD-TENANT CODE IMPROVEMENTS TO INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF HOUSING IN HAWAII.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary supports the establishment of a working group to research and improve the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code similar to the legislation in SB822, SD1, HD1. The Judiciary believes that a working group would be a productive way of determining the issues facing landlords and tenants with the goal of developing statutes that will benefit both groups. However, if the goal of this working group is to increase the supply of housing in Hawai'i then this may go beyond the expertise of the Judiciary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

April 1, 2025

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

RE: House Concurrent Resolution 158, HD1

HEARING: Thursday, April 1, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, 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 **strongly supports** House Concurrent Resolution 158, HD1, requesting the Judiciary to convene a Working Group to develop Landlord-Tenant Code improvement to increase the supply of housing in Hawaii.

Tenants struggling to make ends meet may face uncertainty about their options and available protections. On the other hand, if a housing provider has a tenant who is not paying rent or violating other provisions of a rental agreement, they must go through a lengthy and time-consuming court process to seek remedy. This could discourage property owners from offering or continuing to offer their properties as rental housing. Establishing a Working Group could help explore possible solutions such as early mediation and alternative dispute resolution methods that are more accessible to tenants, promoting fair and efficient conflict resolution between renters and housing providers.

A large number of housing providers in Hawai'i are mom-and-pop landlords who are not professional property managers and are without regular access to education on the continuously evolving requirements of the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code leading to additional confusion. The Working Group could examine ways to improve tenant and mom-and-pop landlord education and expand access to critical resources, such as legal aid and rental assistance programs. Exploring these options and more could help tenants maintain stable housing while providing housing providers with a clearer framework for resolving disputes amicably. We commend the legislature for its leadership on this issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.