



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

JUN YANG  
GOVERNOR'S HOMELESS COORDINATOR  
STATEWIDE OFFICE ON  
HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING SOLUTIONS

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Thursday, March 20, 2025

10:15 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 329, and Videoconference

**COMMENTS on**

**HCR 180** - REQUESTING THE STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SOLUTIONS, DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, COUNTY HOMELESS COORDINATORS, COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND SOCIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS IN HAWAII.

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members:

The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) would like to provide comments to HCR 180.

The purpose of HCR 180 is to request the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions, the Department of Law Enforcement, the homeless coordinators of the county of Oahu, Maui, Hawaii, and Kauai, county law enforcement, and social services providers, to work collaboratively and effectively, as vital stakeholders to address homelessness in Hawaii. These groups are requested to: 1) Prioritize the protection of human and environmental health by taking measures to prevent homeless encampments in, on, or immediately adjacent to freshwater ways that lead to the ocean; 2) Address the impact of trash and stolen shopping carts used by or left behind by homeless individuals, working to mitigate environmental pollution and urban blight; 3) Address the safety concerns associated with homeless individuals domiciled or encamped at bus stops, or immediately in front of businesses or residences, ensuring public safety and access to services; 4) Facilitates access to necessary supportive services for homeless individuals to aid in their recovery and reintegration into society; and 5) Support the State's Kauhale Initiative to expand emergency and transitional homeless shelters, bridge programs, and permanent supportive housing to meet the diverse needs of the homeless population.

While the issue of homelessness remains, Hawaii has made significant strides. Under Governor Green's leadership and within his administration's first term, SOHHS set new priorities, which include the ambitious goal of halving unsheltered homelessness (by November 2026). This

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means helping to shelter and house nearly 2,000 unsheltered people. Several of SOHHS's priorities focus on expanding the deeply affordable housing inventory for individuals experiencing homelessness as well as affordable rental units for individuals, couples, and families who are at risk of homelessness due to the high costs of living in Hawaii.

SOHHS, the State, and the Counties continue to have a robust dialogue and are actively working together as partners to create various programs to shelter and house individuals experiencing homelessness, such as the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered people (HONU). This is a partnership between the State and the City & County of Honolulu, and the Honolulu Police Department to provide 24/7 short-term shelter services and navigation to connect individuals and families on Oahu to longer-term shelter and other housing options, as well as providing a tool for law enforcement officers to divert homeless individuals from citation and arrest.

The Kauhale Initiative is a statewide partnership between State, Counties, services providers, and the community to create deeply affordable spaces for housing and healing our people. Kauhale is a unique and innovative approach that strives to demonstrate a new, cost-effective model that centers housing as a critical component of healthcare. Residents of Kauhale are provided with access to robust wrap-around services, including case management and medical care to build healthy and resilient communities that help people stay successfully housed long-term. This is what makes Hawaii and our kauhale initiatives different and unique.

As the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, I am honored to further the important work of this office and the administration to reduce and prevent homelessness across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

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Submitted on: 3/19/2025 2:06:28 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/20/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lia-Tui Sarong	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha mai kākou,

I offer comments on this resolution HCR180 as I found it distasteful. This documents list concerns the "public" has on houselessness around trash and the environment, businesses and bus tops, and encampments and waterways. But this document puts one thing clear within its writing: it ultimately pinpoints houseless people as "the issue". How are houseless people "separated" from society and thus needed to be "reintegrated"? If the outcasting occurs by family, by addiction, by mental health, by the system, how does one intend to create whole reintegration into a system that is built to reject people. For we can only live in this society if we own a house or rent from another person or entity or live with a family member. Forever must we pay an entity to simple live. For we are illegal if we fail to cooperate with the endlessly hungry capitalist system. For property and profit needs to protected.

I do not think houseless people are the issue. It is clear where the issue lies and it is clear that too many of us are compliant to follow along until the end.

The issue also lies in our elitest attitudes and our unwilling compassion to see that people need basic necessities to live and to live peacefully. Instead we often like to treat people who do not fit our ideal social standards of ableism and respectability with force. For it is a part of this resolution to enable law enforcement. Law enforcement which does not have the true means to aid and solve our houseless "issue". This understanding is *almost* made clear by the inclusion of social services collaboration in the effort to address the houseless "issue".

As I have seen our houseless folks increase over the years, I do understand the want to have our sidewalks open for recreational leisurely walks and our beaches cleared for our keiki and families to enjoy. I do know about finding needles on the beach and even seeing my own mother living out of her truck as I lived under foster care.

And as I continue to deal with social services, I know that our social workers are struggling. That even the people who come from far away to work here in social work are usually not committed enough or compassionate enough to truly solve this "issue". I see this issue as much bigger than these two parts of our government you are trying to engage in this resolution.

So, lastly, as you intend to address this "issue" I urge you to rethink your language and your mindset. Houseless is just an adjective for the people in our community who find themselves unfitting to the capitalist structure on land that once never had capitalist structure.

Mahalo a me aloha.

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Submitted on: 3/19/2025 10:27:33 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/20/2025 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Betsy Kawamura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support HCR180 . My name is Betsy Kawamura , and I am a resident of McCully Moili ili living on 1670 Kalakaua Ave near Makiki Stream, close to the problematic intersection of South King and Kalaukua. I am one of the few last year who mobilized the vast cleaning of the Stream at that junction requiring **7 full rubbish trucks**. I am very supportive of essential synergies presented by HCR180 that will more effectively address homelessness, stream safety, environmental health, and community wellbeing throughout Hawaii. In my engagement on homelessness issues for Moilili McCully we have been really stumped by lack of coordination and proper synergies to address/intervene on homelessness issues - This involves also the very problematic issues of shopping cart policies, enforcement, etc. Improved coordination between state and county authorities and HPD and other depts mentioned above, is natural/rational and is needed to resolve these persistent issues effectively and compassionately.

We appreciate Representative Ikaika Olds introducing this Bill and hope it would go through to address the bottle-neck of homelessness intervention that sorely requires much more efficient synergies/collaboration. As a resident/constituent, we often face real frustration when fluid synergies amongst various departments are Not implemented to solve homelessness issues. We look forward to postitive and **swift** progress, including for shopping cart policies.

**Betsy Kawamura tel 808 726 9311 McCully Moili ili resident 1670 Kalakaua Avenue #301 Honolulu Hawaii 96826**

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Submitted on: 3/19/2025 11:10:29 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/20/2025 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jo Ann Ochi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I will support any bill that will take a strong step in getting the homeless off the streets and out of public facilities. As a citizen if government keeps ignoring this crisis and not forcefully take action to protect the citizens from many of the dangerous and drug addicted homeless I will consider it reckless endangerment . As much as people think the homeless need to be protected I feel many citizens are being exposed to a lot of the terrifying actions of the homeless who are on drugs and pose a big threat to the community!! Example: Danying Zhang( attacked by a homeless with deadly chemicals).

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Submitted on: 3/20/2025 3:47:43 AM

Testimony for HSH on 3/20/2025 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Deutzman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha Representatives,**

**I am in strong support of this bill as it requires more coordinated focus on the impacts homelessness has on the entire community.**

**John Deutzman**