

ACT 94

H.B. NO. 1366

A Bill for an Act Relating to Homelessness.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that many homeless individuals thrive when they have ready access to familiar support groups and loving family members. Many homeless individuals from the continental United States are currently stranded in the State, lacking independent financial resources to return to their home states.

The legislature further finds that homelessness continues to be one of the State's most significant and challenging social problems. Hawaii has limited resources for human services, and homeless individuals may find their families or home states better equipped to provide support.

The legislature additionally finds that between 2014 and 2019, the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association helped to coordinate repatriation programs for homeless individuals across the State. Over that five year period, these programs assisted the return of seven hundred forty-four homeless individuals to their home states, with only sixteen individuals, or less than two per cent of program participants, returning to Hawaii.

The purpose of this Act is to require the department of human services to establish and appropriate funds for a three-year return-to-home pilot program to assist eligible homeless individuals with family reunification.

SECTION 2. (a) The department of human services shall coordinate a voluntary homeless assistance pilot program, to be known as the return-to-home pilot program, to provide eligible homeless individuals with assistance in being reunited with family and relatives in the individual's home state. The department shall establish a public-private partnership by contracting with eligible nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, or foundations to

administer the pilot program without regard to chapters 103D and 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The governor's coordinator on homelessness may assist with the implementation of this program.

(b) An individual who is homeless shall be eligible to participate in the return-to-home pilot program if:

- (1) The individual's participation is completely voluntary;
- (2) The individual, if on parole, probation, or awaiting a court hearing or sentencing, has proper clearance from the court to participate in the pilot program; and
- (3) The individual is indigent and lacks the financial resources necessary to secure transportation to return to the individual's home state.

(c) An individual shall participate in the return-to-home pilot program only once and shall sign an agreement to this effect before participating in the pilot program. The agreement shall be kept on file with the department of human services.

(d) The return-to-home pilot program shall actively seek the participation of local airlines, cruise lines, charter companies, homeless programs, travel agencies, and the visitor industry to coordinate and implement the pilot program.

(e) The return-to-home pilot program shall assist program participants with necessary and proper preparations for travel, including obtaining proper identification, accessing public transportation to the airport, providing orientation relating to airport security, and ensuring sufficient personal hygiene.

(f) The return-to-home pilot program shall cease to exist on January 1, 2026.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$100,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 for implementation of the return-to-home pilot program, including all program costs.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of human services for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the appropriations contained in H.B. No.300, H.D.1, S.D.1, C.D.1,<sup>1</sup> will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be exceeded by \$1,063,767,367 or 10 per cent. In addition, the appropriations contained in this Act will cause the general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be further exceeded by \$100,000 or 1 per cent. The combined total amount of general fund appropriations contained in only these two Acts will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be exceeded by \$1,063,867,367 or 11 per cent. The reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling are that:

- (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to serve the public interest; and
- (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs addressed by this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

(Approved June 21, 2023.)

**Note**

1. Act 164.