

A Bill for an Act Relating to Kupuna Housing.

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

SECTION 1. 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> and this Act will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be exceeded by \$1,064,767,367 or 11.0 per cent. This current declaration takes into account general fund appropriations authorized for fiscal year 2023-2024 in H.B. No. 300, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, C.D. 1,<sup>1</sup> and this Act only. 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 2. The legislature finds that homelessness is one of the most pressing problems in Hawaii and requires a robust, comprehensive, long-term solution to address the State's affordable housing and homelessness crisis. One important component of the solution is ensuring that low-income kupuna are not forced into homelessness through a combination of fixed incomes and rapidly rising rents.

The legislature further finds that, over the last fifty years, the number of cost-burdened renters, or those paying more than thirty per cent of their income for rent, has significantly increased. Today, almost half of all renters in the State pay more than thirty per cent of their income for rent. High housing costs have driven more and more Hawaii residents into homelessness, and now the homelessness rate per capita in Hawaii is among the highest in the nation.

The legislature additionally finds that, by making smart investments in homelessness and housing, using data-driven practices, and improving coordination, Hawaii has gradually begun to turn the tide in the homelessness crisis. In 2017, Hawaii's homelessness rate went down for the first time in years, a trend that continued in 2018. During the regular session of 2018, the legislature made unprecedented investments in low-income housing and homelessness, appropriating \$200,000,000 for the rental housing revolving fund, \$30,000,000 for ohana zones, and \$13,500,000 for proven-effective and promising homelessness programs.

The legislature also finds that, to turn back fifty years of growth in Hawaii's housing and homelessness crisis, investments of this scale must be made consistently in the coming years. Hawaii must prioritize programs that are the most cost-effective and protect the most vulnerable populations, including the State's kupuna. The 2017 Hawaii Homeless Service Utilization Report found that there are 1,386 homeless elders in the State. Many more elders face homelessness as rents skyrocket. Due to elders' fixed incomes, a state rent supplement program for kupuna is needed to expand on the existing state rent supplement program administered by the Hawaii public housing authority.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to temporarily expand the state rent supplement program specifically for qualified kupuna who are sixty-two

years of age or older and are homeless, or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, and to appropriate funds for this purpose.

SECTION 3. Chapter 356D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new section to part VIII to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

**“§356D- State rent supplement program for kupuna.** (a) There is established the state rent supplement program for kupuna to be administered by the authority to provide state rent supplement assistance and other services to qualified kupuna under this section.

(b) The authority shall:

- (1) Provide state rent supplement assistance to qualified kupuna;
- (2) Provide housing counseling to assist qualified kupuna in obtaining or retaining permanent housing; and
- (3) Coordinate with mental health services providers and other supportive services providers to assist qualified kupuna.

(c) The authority may enter into memoranda of agreement with the counties or specialized nonprofit organizations as necessary to implement this section.

(d) The authority, without regard to chapter 91, shall establish rules and any additional qualification standards specifically for recipients of the state rent supplement program for kupuna.

(e) The authority shall submit to the legislature an annual report of its findings and recommendations regarding the state rent supplement program for kupuna, including any proposed legislation, no later than thirty days prior to the convening of each regular session.

(f) As used in this section, “qualified kupuna” means a person who:

- (1) Is sixty-two years of age or older;
- (2) Is homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless; and
- (3) Otherwise meets the requirements for a qualified tenant under section 356D-153.”

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 for the state rent supplement program for kupuna established under section 356D- , Hawaii Revised Statutes; provided that any funds appropriated under this section shall be in addition to the base budget of the Hawaii public housing authority for the state rent supplement program.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii public housing authority for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.<sup>2</sup>

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023, and shall be repealed on June 30, 2026.

(Approved June 21, 2023.)

#### Notes

1. Act 164.

2. Edited pursuant to HRS §23G-16.5.