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IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

25:OED

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Tuesday, March 18, 2025
9:35 AM – Room 229, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
HB 1097, HD1
RELATING TO PUBLIC HOUSING EVICTIONS

Honorable Chair Keohokalole, Chair Chang, and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection, and Senate Committee on Housing, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support** of House Bill (HB) 1097, HD1, which seeks to reduce the time required to store unclaimed personal effects of a tenant evicted from public housing, ensuring that vacant units can be repaired and reoccupied more quickly by families in need.

The HPHA is committed to providing safe, affordable housing and fostering equitable living environments free from discrimination. Through our public housing and rental assistance programs, we serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community, including:

- Families earning less than 30% of the area median income (AMI)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Elderly residents on fixed incomes

With thousands of families currently on the waitlist for public housing, it is essential that HPHA is able to efficiently prepare and turn over vacant units so that more individuals and families can secure stable housing.



Under current procedures, when a tenant is evicted and leaves personal belongings behind, HPHA must store the items within the vacated unit, as none of HPHA's public housing properties have dedicated storage facilities on-site. This delays essential repair work and prevents new families from moving in, extending the time units remain vacant and unavailable for eligible low-income applicants.

From years of experience, we have found that the vast majority of items left behind are not valuable personal belongings, but instead, broken furniture, trash, and other discarded materials. The current requirement to store these items for extended periods unnecessarily delays the ability to prepare the unit for new tenants and diverts resources from more critical housing needs.

HB 1097, HD1 addresses these challenges by:

1. Reducing the Required Storage Period for Unclaimed Property
 - Prior to an eviction, HPHA provides tenants with multiple warnings (both in-person and in writing) that all personal belongings must be removed from the unit.
 - Shortening the required storage timeframe allows HPHA to make units available to new residents more quickly, reducing extended vacancy periods.
2. Ensuring Fairness While Improving Housing Availability
 - This measure strikes a reasonable balance by ensuring that former tenants are given ample notice to retrieve their belongings while also prioritizing the urgent need to house new families on the waitlist.
 - Every day a unit remains vacant is another day a family remains unhoused—HB 1097, HD1 will help minimize unnecessary delays in placing families into stable, affordable housing.
3. Increasing Operational Efficiency
 - With no dedicated storage space, HPHA is often required to store unclaimed property in the unit itself, preventing much-needed repairs, maintenance, and turnover efforts.
 - Since most of what is left behind is junk, reducing the storage timeframe will help HPHA efficiently remove debris, restore units, and house new families faster.
 - By reducing storage time, HPHA can free up resources, accelerate unit rehabilitation, and ensure that state and federal housing assets are utilized as efficiently as possible.

With thousands of families in need of housing, HPHA must maximize the availability of every unit while ensuring that former tenants are treated fairly and given appropriate notice. HB 1097, HD1 provides a practical solution that allows for timely reoccupation of public housing units, ensuring that low-income families can access stable housing without unnecessary delays. We strongly support this measure and respectfully urge its passage.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this important legislation, and for your continued commitment to increasing affordable housing opportunities for the people of Hawaii.



HB-1097-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 10:41:08 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/18/2025 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Carney	Testifying for Affordable Housing Connections LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Affordable Housing Connections LLC is in support of the intent of HB1097. We would like to draw your attention to the **HUD Uniform Relocations ACT (URA)** applicable to federally financed housing projects to avoid any conflicts between this Bill and the URA and to clarify which legislation would take precedence should both be applicable to a particular project.

Mahalo,

Kevin R. Carney

Affordable Housing Connections LLC

HB-1097-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 8:20:58 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/18/2025 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB1097 HD1

And the testimony provided by Director Quansafi.

Condominium Associations face this same battle. Although it is the unit owner responsibility to comply with the storage requirements, they to are entangled with the storage cost burden plus the cost to move the items out in order to prepare the unit for a new tenant.

Tenants are given ample warning under the HRS 521 and the eviction process takes additional months, therefore I support Director Quansafi's testimony in support of HB1097 HD1

Thank you,

Raelene Tenno

HB-1097-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 10:11:32 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/18/2025 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kayla Marie	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this measure. This bill is cruel.

HB-1097-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2025 9:26:47 AM

Testimony for CPN on 3/18/2025 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to strongly oppose this bill. With this new administration, the cruelty levels in this country have gone up. I don't think Hawaii wants to follow in that vein.

We are the Aloha state and we need to take care of our people, especially the least of these. When people get removed from public housing that puts a greater burden on our state. And forcing them to pick up their things much sooner before they lose everything is just cruelty, added on top of whatever they're going through right now.

This is not who we are as a state. Public housing is our housing. We need to take care of the people who live in them.

Things are only gonna get harder for us as a nation and as a state and we need to take care of our people. That is our responsibility. Our Kuleana.

So please vote NO for this bill.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Lum, Ewa Beach

LATE

HB-1097-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/17/2025 12:59:34 PM

Testimony for CPN on 3/18/2025 9:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I DO NOT SUPPORT HB1097. Two weeks is NOT ENOUGH time for an evicted tenant(s) to find another rental for themselves let alone all of their personal property. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.