

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS AND SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

April 01, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

In consideration of
H.B. 1325 HD3 SD1
RELATING TO HOUSING.

Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and members of the Committees.

HHFDC **supports** HB 1325 HD3 SD1, which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under HHFDC to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project by: granting those tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project or establishing a fund to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance; providing information, either directly or through a contracted service, on how to obtain assistance and exercise the right of first refusal; establishing procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants; and establish consequences for a developer's noncompliance.

The majority of HHFDC projects do not displace residents. If a project does cause displacement, we typically require developers to provide relocation assistance.

HHFDC supports this bill as it establishes a standard that all projects must meet. HHFDC would support an **amendment** that would require displaced tenants the right of first refusal in the proposed housing project and establishment of a fund for relocation benefits.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



**Parents And
Children Together**
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1325 HD3 SD1 RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, & Members,
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, & Members,
Senate Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Vice President of Strategy and External Affairs
DATE: April 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1325 HD 3 SD1, which assists certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction due to the development of affordable housing projects.

PACT's origins are in public housing. We were founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968 and have had a home-base there ever since. Currently we have programs based at KPT, including our Family and Economic Opportunities Centers, Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms and offices, and our Tenacious, Rooted, Youth Center (formerly known as the Teen Center). We also have a Youth Center at Pu'uwai Momi Public Housing in Halawa. These roots in public housing and our relationship with families over the years are key to PACT's values and identity as an organization.

Through these programs we provide direct services and partner with families to connect them with support for their health, safety, and economic stability. Displacement and relocation without intensive support disconnects people from critical services such as healthcare, childcare, and the school environments they are familiar with. It's important to us that the community we have been nurtured in is similarly treated with respect and dignity as their legal rights are protected. Residents forced to relocate during development or redevelopment must retain their access to services and schools, so their healthcare, social services and education are not interrupted.

Over the years, PACT has developed into a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 10:34:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Kohn MD	Testifying for We Are One, Inc. - www.WeAreOne.cc - WAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong Support HB1325 HD3 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

I am writing in **strong support of HB1325 HD3 SD1**. This measure creates a balanced approach to managing resident displacement in new affordable developments, establishing critical protections for existing community members while facilitating necessary affordable housing construction.

When long-time residents face displacement, they risk long-term adverse impacts to health, education, and finances while communities risk unraveling the social bonds that give our neighborhoods their strength and character.

HB1325 HD3 SD1 guarantees displaced individuals priority access to comparable units in the new development at affordable rates, ensuring they can return to their community once construction is complete. If the right to return for these tenants is not offered, the legislation mandates the creation of a dedicated fund providing three months of relocation support, alleviating the economic strain on affected families. These measures transform what could be a destabilizing experience into a well-managed transition with clear outcomes.

Too often developers make promises or are required to provide housing, services and community benefits, and then do not deliver on these promises. It is important to establish mechanisms to hold developers accountable to these promises.

By establishing these mechanisms, HB1325 prevents anti-development sentiment from growing. Hawai'i's affordable housing crisis requires new development to ease the cost burdens associated with insufficient supply. Yet, when our community sees local families displaced to make way for new development, and the process to respectfully relocate families is not followed, it makes our community less in favor of development of any kind and adds to the sentiment that Hawai'i is being changed to benefit outside interests, and development is not in favor of our community.

While data shows that increased housing supply helps moderate price growth and reduces overall displacement pressure, the immediate impact of construction on existing residents can generate

significant neighborhood opposition. These growing oppositional sentiments affect our ability to develop and further restrict our ability to mitigate increasing housing costs. This legislation bridges that gap by acknowledging and addressing immediate community concerns while enabling essential housing development to proceed.

This bill requires no state funds, and has no revenue costs to the state.

HB1325 SD11 does not require the state to spend any money or use any state funds. Instead, it just requires that developers who use state and federal funds or streamlining processes and exemptions from fees to make sure they properly provide relocation counseling, support, and a right to return to our local community first. This bill was modeled after the State of Georgia requirements for any developer of affordable housing. We need to ask more of our developers like other states already do.

By supporting HB1325 SD1, you can help forge a path toward housing development that serves both current and future generations of Hawai'i residents. This legislation demonstrates that we can achieve meaningful housing growth while preserving the community connections that make our neighborhoods unique.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mālama Pono



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

April 1, 2025

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 1325 HD3 SD1 - RELATING TO HOUSING

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 1325 HD3 SD1** which would require assistance to tenants who are displaced by an affordable housing project. Our housing shortage is severe and will require us to redevelop many existing residential areas into more dense residential uses. However, in the process of redeveloping existing homes, we must ensure that those who currently live there are treated fairly, equitably and are allowed the opportunity to return to their community.

We would like to offer a few comments on the current version of this bill:

1. We would ask that the bill be returned to its original form where displaced tenants are both offered the right of first refusal to a comparable unit at an affordable rate **and** monetary temporary/permanent relocation assistance. We share the opinion that we should be focusing on bringing down the input costs of our housing, and that a bill like this could, instead, increase costs. However, we need to recognize that there is a human cost to redeveloping existing residential units and that cost should be factored in. We would implore the legislature to continue to bring down input costs to housing through repealing/reforming burdensome fees, overly restrictive zoning laws and streamlining and expediting permitting processes.



Hawai'i YIMBY

Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.org

info@hawaiiyimby.org

2. To emphasize, existing tenants should be offered the right of first refusal to a comparable unit in the new development. Every effort should be made to ensure the existing resident is offered the opportunity to return and can **afford** to do so. Since the provision to have the tenant return to a comparable unit in the new development at the same rent in the previous development was removed, we would ask that a displaced tenant be given the right of first refusal of a comparable unit **and** will not pay more than 30% of their income. Also, in the event that there are not enough units at certain income requirements to accommodate all tenants that choose to return, that additional units be allocated by transferring units from a higher income requirement to a lower income requirement, ensuring that the tenant is paying the rent that aligns with their income.

We believe in increasing housing stability. This involves protecting existing tenants from displacement and minimizing the effects when their home is redeveloped into more housing. We support the main points of this bill: (1) To give displaced tenants the right of first refusal and to return to a comparable unit at an affordable rate or provide relocation assistance to those displaced; (2) Ensure adequate education and communication about the existing tenant's rights during this process and the progress of the redevelopment.

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawai'i YIMBY

Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.org

info@hawaiiyimby.org

Sincerely,

Damien Waikoloa

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1325 HD3 SD1, RELATING TO HOUSING

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

April 1, 2025

Aloha Chair(s) Dela Cruz & Rhoads, Vice Chair(s) Moriwaki & Gabbard, and Members of the Ways & Means and Judiciary Committees:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB1325 HD3 SD1, RELATING TO HOUSING. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports policies that preserve housing for residents, including the expansion of rental assistance programs and tenant protections.

In the process of developing or redeveloping affordable housing projects under the Hawai'i Housing Finance & Development Corporation, existing tenants can be evicted or displaced. When that happens, tenants must have rights and protections in place to ensure that they remain housed or can relocate to new housing with as little disruption as possible in the lives of tenants and their families. The stability and community that housing brings must not be taken lightly. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports legislative efforts to meaningfully address the uncertainty that displaced/evicted tenants might have to face.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in Support of HB1325 HD3 SD1, RELATING TO HOUSING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.se contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

PO Box 2041 • Honolulu, HI 96805 • www.hawaiidemocrats.org



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Support for HB 1325 HD3 SD1 – Relating to Housing

Senate Committees on Ways & Means and Judiciary

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM Conf. Rm. 211 and via Videoconference

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB1325 HD3 SD1**, which establishes a method of stabilizing residents who may be displaced by new 201H projects which may cause the displacement of residents. This thoughtful legislation creates a framework that addresses both our urgent need for new affordable housing, addresses community concern of new developments, while protecting our existing communities and their residents.

One of the primary concerns raised by community members about new housing development is the displacement of current residents and the disruption of established neighborhood bonds. This bill directly addresses these valid concerns by creating a clear process for displaced residents to return to their communities once development is complete. By guaranteeing residents the right of first refusal for comparable units at affordable rates, the bill ensures that new development serves both current and future residents of our communities.

The bill's provisions for relocation assistance and ongoing communication demonstrate a commitment to treating displaced residents with dignity and respect throughout the development process. The requirement to establish a fund providing at least three months' worth of relocation benefits will help ease the financial burden of temporary displacement, while the mandated communication procedures will help residents stay informed and connected to their community during the transition.

These protective measures transform what could be a traumatic displacement into a structured, supported transition with a clear path back to the community. **This approach helps build trust between developers and residents, potentially reducing opposition to much-needed housing development projects.**

Moreover, research from UCLA Lewis Center conducted a study on common rhetoric in opposition to new development and found that often the argument is distilled down to opposition to the developers themselves, not necessarily the development¹. Despite evidence to the contrary that new development actually slows the increase of housing cost in the area at scale and lowers displacement through providing more housing options², the feeling of change and actual displacement can lead to larger neighborhood opposition to new developments. This

1

<https://www.tandfonline-com.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/doi/full/10.1080/07352166.2019.1623684#d1e127>

² <https://escholarship.org/content/qt7bx938fx/qt7bx938fx.pdf>



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Support for HB 1325 HD3 SD1 – Relating to Housing

Senate Committees on Ways & Means and Judiciary

Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM Conf. Rm. 211 and via Videoconference

legislation builds on a model for redevelopment that acknowledges the human impact of housing construction while still moving forward with crucial affordable housing projects. By ensuring that current residents have the option to return to these new developments, we can build more housing while preserving the social fabric that makes our neighborhoods strong and resilient.

HB1325 HD3 SD1 addresses both our critical need for more affordable housing and our obligation to protect vulnerable residents who might otherwise be displaced without support or recourse. It represents a thoughtful solution that allows us to grow our housing supply while maintaining the stability and cohesion of our existing communities.

We urge you to support this important legislation that will help us build a more inclusive and equitable housing future for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony in support of HB1325 HD3 SD1 Relating to Housing
By Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services
Before the Senate Committees on Ways and Means and on Judiciary
04/01/2025

Kokua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services strongly supports HB1325 HD3 SD1 Relating to Housing. This bill will help ensure that local families who have lived in an area for generations are not displaced to make way for 'new affordable housing' development.

HB1325 SD1 will ensure that all tenants get comprehensive relocation assistance and the choice to move back to the communities, where many have lived, worked and established ties for generations. KPT low-rise residents have asked for the following to be explicitly required by law:

- The right to return to the project, as promised by the developer when the developer was approved for LIHTC and RHRF subsidies [from HHFDC](#) (see link)
- Individualized relocation counseling, which provides tenants assistance with locating and leasing comparable housing and which follows tenants for the life of the redevelopment project, to maximize their likelihood of returning.

KPT low-rise tenants want to make sure no one in Mayor Wright or other redevelopment projects face [the same struggles they are having](#) (see link). Requiring developers to offer displaced community members the right to return ensures that affordable housing projects actually serve those most in need, especially our **local** families struggling in one of the most challenging economic and housing environments in the country.

We thank the Committees in advance for their strong support of this urgent and essential measure!



David Derauf, MD, MPH
Executive Director

On behalf of Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the Senate Committees on
Ways and Means & Judiciary

In Consideration of House Bill No. 1325 HD3 SD1
RELATING TO HOUSING

To Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard and the honorable members of the committees,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 35,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lahaina Strong, stands in **support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1**, which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under HHFDC to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project. This bill is a critical measure to prevent displacement and protect our community. Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out, replacing affordable homes with projects that no longer serve the people who need them most. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

By requiring developers to offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance, this bill creates essential safeguards for renters. It also holds developers accountable by ensuring they maintain communication with tenants throughout the process. These protections are especially crucial now, as many of our families are still struggling to find stable housing.

We respectfully urge the **support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1** to strengthen protections for tenants so that rebuilding truly serves the people who call Hawai'i home.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lahaina Strong



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 10:00AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1325 HD3 SD1 Relating to Housing

Aloha e Chairs Dela Cruz, Rhoads, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1325 House Draft 3 Senate Draft 1 (HB1325 HD3 SD1), which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project by: granting those tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project or establishing a fund to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance; providing information, either directly or through a contracted service, on how to obtain assistance and exercise the right of first refusal; and establishing procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants. Establishes consequences for a developer's noncompliance.

HB1325 HD3 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii's affordable housing crisis has inadvertently displaced long-time tenants, destabilizing communities and stripping vulnerable groups of essential support. This measure requires developers of state- or federally funded affordable housing projects to offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal for comparable units or a relocation program with proper benefits and continuous communication, ensuring that new developments truly serve the community. It protects residents and supports the economy by preserving the local workforce, maintaining consumer spending, and fostering economic resilience. The Chamber supports this legislation because it enhances tenant stability and strengthens local economic health.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1325 House Draft 3 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify



March 28, 2025

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

RE: HB 1325 HD3 SD 1- Relating to the Rental Housing Revolving Fund
Hearing date: Tuesday April 1, 2025 at 10:00AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NAIOP Hawaii in opposition to HB 1325 HD3 SD1 Relating to the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF). NAIOP Hawaii represents over 200 industry professionals, including developers, owners, investors, asset managers, lenders, and other stakeholders committed to responsible real estate development in Hawai'i.

HB 1325 requires developers developing an affordable housing project under Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project by: 1) granting those tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project; or 2) establishing a fund to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance on how to obtain assistance and exercise the right of first refusal. Further the measure establishes procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants and establishes consequences for a developer's noncompliance.

While we appreciate the previous committee's amendment to remove the requirement to offer a unit in the new proposed housing at same rate as the prior unit, we remain concerned with the relocation benefits of no less than three month's rent. In the current version, the financial compensation provisions require developers to provide three months of comparable rent upfront, which significantly increases project costs and will impact the number of affordable housing units that can be built. To be clear NAIOP Hawaii strongly support tenant protections, however, this bill creates unintended financial consequences that will stall affordable housing development, increase project costs, and ultimately reduce the number of affordable units built in Hawai'i.

If this bill passes as written, affordable housing projects will face greater delays, higher costs, and increased financing challenges, leading to fewer developments breaking ground. Instead of ensuring affordability, this bill discourages investment and slows down production—the opposite of what Hawai'i needs.

We urge the committee to reconsider HB1325 HD3 SD1 and find a solution that protects tenants while ensuring affordable housing projects remain financially viable. We stand ready to collaborate on policies that will truly accelerate affordable housing production and create a sustainable path forward for Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reyn Tanaka', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Reyn Tanaka, President
NAIOP Hawaii



HAWAII WORKERS CENTER

Defending and Respecting the workers of
Hawaii'i

(503) WORKERS ☎
(503) 967- 5377 ☎

hawaiiworkerscenter@gmail.com ✉

Mail: 2252 Puna St., Honolulu, HI 96817 ✉

hawaiiworkerscenter.org 🌐

March 31, 2025

COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Executive Board Committee

Rev. Sam Domingo
Board Chair

Mary Ochs
Vice Chair

Dr. Arcelita Imasa
Secretary

Kami Yamamoto
Treasurer

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for H.B. 1325 HD3 SD1 Relating to Housing

Dear Chairs Sen. Dela Cruz and Sen. Rhoads, Vice Chairs Sen. Moriwaki and Sen. Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Ways & Means and Commerce and Judiciary:

Board Members

Yoko Liriano

Nanea Lo

Innocenta
Sound-Kikku

Ray Catania

Justin Jansen

Leyton Torda

Kami Yamamoto

CJ Johnson

The Hawaii Workers Center (HWC) envisions a Hawaii in which all workers are empowered to exercise their right to organize for their social, economic and political well-being.

It is a resource of information, education, training and organizing for Hawaii's workers.

The HWC stands in strong support of H.B. 1325 HD3 SD1 which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under HHFDC to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project by: 1. granting those tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project at an affordable rate or establishing a fund to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance; 2. providing information, either directly or through a contracted service, on how to obtain assistance and exercise the right of first refusal; and 3. establishing procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants.

Executive Director
Sergio Alcubilla III, Esq.

Our primary office is currently located in the Towers of Kuhio Park, a large public housing complex here on Oahu. While the buildings are greatly in need of repair, the people that call them home are at the heart of the working class community of Kalihi. Many come from immigrant and migrant backgrounds and most have called this place home for years. Currently, there is a strong sense of uncertainty and fear as many are now forced to find alternative housing while the redevelopment is underway.

We believe H.B. 1325 HD3 SD 1 will help avoid the consequences of such a scenario and will provide much needed relief to tenants now and in the future. Thank you for your willingness to support this important measure.

Sincerely,

Sergio Alcubilla
Executive Director

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 1325, H.D. 3, S.D. 1 – Relating to Housing

Hearing: Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 10:00 AM, Conference Room 211

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) Speaks!, mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. No. 1325, H.D. 3, S.D. 1**, which requires developers undertaking affordable housing projects under the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to assist tenants who may face displacement or eviction as a result of such projects.

Key Points:

1. **Preserving Housing Stability and Preventing Displacement:** As affordable housing development remains a critical issue in Hawai'i, HCAN acknowledges the urgent need to address the growing concerns surrounding the displacement of vulnerable tenants. The displacement of current tenants, especially low-income individuals and families, from affordable housing projects or properties slated for redevelopment is a significant social and economic issue that disproportionately affects marginalized communities. HCAN supports this bill because it directly addresses displacement by providing displaced tenants with crucial protections such as the **right of first refusal** for a comparable unit in the new development or the establishment of a **relocation benefits fund** to ensure the tenants have the support they need to maintain housing stability.

2. **Equitable Access to Housing:** We believe that all tenants, particularly those in affordable housing, deserve the opportunity to remain in their communities when redevelopment occurs. By offering the **right of first refusal**, this bill helps create an equitable housing environment where current tenants are not unfairly displaced, but instead are given priority access to available units that meet their needs. This action aligns with HCAN's commitment to supporting initiatives that preserve affordable housing opportunities for the most vulnerable members of our community.
3. **Transparency and Information Access:** The provision of **information on how to access assistance** and the right of first refusal is a critical component of the bill. Many tenants may not be aware of their rights or the support available to them. We strongly support the proposal for developers to either provide this information directly or through a contracted service. This ensures that all tenants, regardless of their literacy levels or access to resources, can easily understand their options and make informed decisions.
4. **Tracking and Communication:** Establishing **procedures to track and maintain communication** with displaced tenants is vital for ensuring that their needs are met and that they are aware of their rights throughout the process. HCAN Speaks! believes that clear and consistent communication between developers and tenants is essential for building trust and ensuring that no one is left behind during the transition.
5. **Consequences for Noncompliance:** Lastly, we strongly support the provision of **consequences for developers who fail to comply** with these tenant protections. Accountability is crucial in ensuring that developers fulfill their obligations to displaced tenants. The establishment of a clear enforcement mechanism will help ensure that developers take their responsibilities seriously and that tenants' rights are upheld throughout the development process.

HCAN Speaks! stands firmly in support of this bill as a critical step toward protecting tenants in affordable housing developments from displacement and ensuring that they have a fair and transparent process for receiving the support they need. By ensuring that tenants are given the right of first refusal or provided with sufficient relocation assistance, this bill creates a balanced approach to development that prioritizes the well-being of current residents, especially those in low-income communities.

We urge you to pass this bill and continue your work to create a more equitable and just housing landscape for all Hawai'i residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this critical measure.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 10:36:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doneileen Willets	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

My name is Doneileen Willets, I'm a tenant and long time resident of Kuhio Homes. In the span of 5 months I have witnessed families struggle as they search for clarity. The plans we thought would have taken place turned out to be confusing, unorganized, and careless. Our own housing office was not aware of the redevelopment, only by word of mouth.

The 90 day notice was far from promising, none of what the letter entails were ever offered. Instead we received options that were far from our districts, units that were dilapidated, or decent units but a bedroom less than what we currently have.

I am just one voice and I spoke to many tenants apart of the phase 1 project, during our peaceful protest families were able to come out and share their concerns. A lot of us don't want to leave our hometown. A few tenants said they were being forced to move to the towers but they don't trust TMO, one said they're battling cancer and that the project added to their depleting health. My neighbor who has a confirmed that requires to her to have her own bedroom was offered a unit smaller and she took it so she doesn't get pushed out to Waiane. Another neighbor of mines has recently passed before she was able to see her new place and in her last words she wanted comfort knowing that her grandchildren will be well looked after.

This is destroying families, we look out for each other, we respect each other, we thrive as one. I just hope there will be more meetings for the community than individual family meetings where things are kept in the dark. This is what's destroying our community.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of bill HB 1325

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 2:51:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pearl Sheck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

*- I **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1325** to protect our local families.*

As leaders, our role and responsibility is to protect our followers and in this case it is to protect the local families that will be encountered in redevelopment within the community. As we learned over the years, private companies have only one goal of redevelopment which is profit (Money). Help us protect the families and make sure that the private companies are not just doing the bare minimum to meet the quota but to ensure that we PROTECT our families.

- We need this bill to make sure local residents who have lived in an area for generations are not being displaced to make way for new "affordable housing" development.

*- I support an **amendment** to require that developers provide both the "right of first refusal" **AND** provide robust "relocation benefits." (Section 201H-38 (1)(E)(i)) We must ensure the right to return is protected by this bill.*

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 8:00:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tara King	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support these measures,Tara King

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 3:41:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christy Shaver	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Christy

Lahaina

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:02:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Shay Chan Hodges

Maui

Honorable members of the Senate Ways and Means and Judiciary Committees,

I am writing in **strong support** of this bill that will require that any 201H development completed with state or federal funds provide relocation assistance to tenants, provide right of first refusal to tenants once the development is completed and provide services to maintain communication with tenants throughout the construction process.

As rents rise across our island, locals, especially Native Hawaiians, are increasingly forced to move to the mainland or face homelessness. Our public housing developments are one of the only options for those living in poverty to be able to have a decent roof over their heads without paying more than 30% of their income in rent. That is why our island's limited amount of public housing has years-long waitlists that only open a few times a year. Without this bill, those who were already lucky enough to get onto those waitlists and receive a unit, face the possibility of losing their homes permanently.

I have previously worked as a homeless outreach worker and housing case manager and many of the clients I worked with were disabled with their only source of income being Supplemental Security Income, paying around \$900 per month. I am not exaggerating when I say there are simply no market rate units available at that income level. The reason programs like public housing and section 8 exist are to fill the gap left by the market so that these people do not become homeless. That is why it is crucial that this bill is passed so that families and individuals being displaced by this development are able to return to decent, truly affordable housing.

Mahalo,
Camden Mahoney

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 11:42:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicki Tedesco	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.
sincerely,

Nicole Tedesco

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 12:36:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support this bill!

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 12:57:24 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's not fair that new developments displace current residents and don't support them in a transition to new housing. I support this bill.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 1:18:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Lomeli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Kathy Lomeli

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 3:26:19 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Iwalani Castillo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support return rights and housing assistance to tennants who want and need this support.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 3:56:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
dennis boyd miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

Thank you,

Dennis B Miller

Waikiki

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 7:45:23 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Pokipala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The houseless epidemic is at an all time high. There are homeless people on every corner these days. The efforts being made to create housing is admirable and much needed. The poor planning around the creation of more housing needs to be reviewed and improved.

When redevelopment of our low-income homes require moving people out of the homes they lived in for decades this must be done with care and respect. Proper relocation services should be implemented, comparable homes should be provided, and accurate record keeping should be a priority or we may see an increase of families becoming houseless. These basic needs must be met, and if developers do not fulfill that goal, they should be held accountable.

I'm sure redevelopment is not meant to undermine the lives of those in our communities, but when people are treated like second class citizens or just a nuisance that needs to be discarded, then we are in the wrong. Use the experience of the community to build housing options that are helpful and appropriate. Maybe developers could use the ideas of the community members rather than just using the ideas that will bring money to the state without being held accountable for the trauma it causes the people it was meant to help.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 7:54:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I write in strong support of HB1325. While increased housing supply does help restrain price growth and reduce overall displacement pressure, the immediate impact of construction on existing residents can generate significant neighborhood opposition.

Too often developers make promises or are required to provide housing, services and community benefits, and then do not deliver on these promises. It is important to establish mechanisms to hold developers accountable to these promises.

By establishing these mechanisms, HB1325 prevents anti-development sentiment from growing. Hawai'i's affordable housing crisis requires new development to ease the cost burdens associated with insufficient supply. Yet, when our community sees local families displaced to make way for new development, and the process to respectfully relocate families is not followed, it makes our community less in favor of development of any kind and adds to the sentiment that Hawai'i is being changed to benefit outside interests, and development is not in favor of our community. HB1325 could alleviate this problem and ease the fear and trauma of displacement. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo for your attention,

Dr. Lorna Holmes

Honolulu 96817

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 9:15:58 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Biggs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Protect local families from being priced out of their own homes. Consider restoring the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:59:35 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice Toma Shiira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB1325

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:00:17 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Ho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Richard Ho

Galen Fox
Joint Ways and Means/Judiciary Committees
Testimony in Support of HB1325 HD3 SD1
Tuesday, April 1st, 2025, 10:00AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

In **support of** HB1325 HD3 SD1. We must better manage resident displacement in new “affordable” housing developments. We should do so by protecting existing community members **every time** affordable housing construction displaces them.

Displacing long-time residents negatively affects their health, education, and finances, even as it unravels the social bonds giving our neighborhoods their strength and character.

HB1325 HD3 SD1 helps displaced individuals by guarantying them priority access to comparable units in the new development at affordable rates, meaning they can return to their community once construction is complete. Otherwise, the legislation mandates funding three months of relocation support, alleviating the impact on affected families. These measures turn a destabilizing experience into a managed transition with positive outcomes.

Hawaii’s affordable housing crisis requires new development. Yet, when new projects force local residents onto the street, we correctly know that developers serve outside interests, not our community.

HB1325 SD1 does not require the state to spend any money or use any state funds. Instead, developers who use state and federal funds or streamlining processes and exemptions from fees are required to provide relocation counseling, support, and a right to return.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha, Galen Fox

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 2:55:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 4:38:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Jennifer Lum from ‘Ewa Beach, and I am writing in strong support of HB1325 HD3 SD1. This measure creates a balanced approach to managing resident displacement in new affordable developments, establishing critical protections for existing community members while facilitating necessary affordable housing construction.

When long-time residents face displacement, they risk long-term adverse impacts to health, education, and finances while communities risk unraveling the social bonds that give our neighborhoods their strength and character.

HB1325 HD3 SD1 guarantees displaced individuals priority access to comparable units in the new development at affordable rates, ensuring they can return to their community once construction is complete. If the right to return for these tenants is not offered, the legislation mandates the creation of a dedicated fund providing three months of relocation support, alleviating the economic strain on affected families. These measures transform what could be a destabilizing experience into a well-managed transition with clear outcomes.

Too often developers make promises or are required to provide housing, services and community benefits, and then do not deliver on these promises. It is important to establish mechanisms to hold developers accountable to these promises.

By establishing these mechanisms, HB1325 prevents anti-development sentiment from growing. Hawai‘i’s affordable housing crisis requires new development to ease the cost burdens associated with insufficient supply. Yet, when our community sees local families displaced to make way for new development, and the process to respectfully relocate families is not followed, it makes our community less in favor of development of any kind and adds to the sentiment that Hawai‘i is being changed to benefit outside interests, and development is not in favor of our community.

While data shows that increased housing supply helps moderate price growth and reduces overall displacement pressure, the immediate impact of construction on existing residents can generate significant neighborhood opposition. These growing oppositional sentiments affect our ability to develop and further restrict our ability to mitigate increasing housing costs. This legislation

bridges that gap by acknowledging and addressing immediate community concerns while enabling essential housing development to proceed.

This bill requires no state funds, and has no revenue costs to the state. HB1325 SD11 does not require the state to spend any money or use any state funds. Instead, it just requires

that developers who use state and federal funds or streamlining processes and exemptions from fees to make sure they properly provide relocation counseling, support, and a right to return to our local community first. This bill was modeled after the State of Georgia requirements for any developer of affordable housing. We need to ask more of our developers like other states already do.

By supporting HB1325 SD1, you can help forge a path toward housing development that serves both current and future generations of Hawai'i residents. This legislation demonstrates that we can achieve meaningful housing growth while preserving the community connections that make our neighborhoods unique.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 7:18:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD3 SD1, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

However, we respectfully request that the Legislature restore the provision requiring new units to be offered at the same rate as the prior unit, adjusted for inflation. Without this safeguard, tenants may still be priced out of returning to their homes—even in projects labeled as affordable.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD3 SD1—with stronger rent protections included—to protect

Hawai‘i’s families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina’s recovery.

Kazuo Flores

Dina Shek
Honolulu, HI 96822

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: April 1, 2025 at 10:00 AM (Room 211)

Re: SUPPORT for HB 1325, HD 3, SD 1, Relating to Housing

Dear Committee Members,

I offer this testimony in strong support of HB 1325, HD 3, SD 1 which prevents further displacement of low-income residents impacted by affordable housing redevelopment. In my professional work as the Legal Director of the Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai‘i, I have seen the redevelopment of low-income and public housing result in the permanent uprooting of tight-knit local communities, with longtime resident families left to face further housing instability. This frequently occurs despite developers promising the “right to return” and relocation services.

As recent stories by [Hawaii News Now](#),¹ [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#),² and [Civil Beat](#)³, sixty-four Kūhiō Park Terrace (KPT) Low-Rise units are set to be demolished to build 304 affordable housing units, yet most residents there have not been provided adequate relocation services, and there is no process to facilitate their legal right to return. I have personally accompanied KPT residents to a “comparable unit” that was boarded up and uninhabitable. Households with disabled elders are offered walk-ups and inaccessible units. And families with school-aged children are sent to units far outside their school districts.

Despite a clear contractual obligation to provide a right to return, and contrary to standard practices, no contractor has been hired to monitor and communicate with the displaced residents following their displacement. This is wholly unacceptable and does not bode well for upcoming redevelopment projects at Mayor Wright, Ka‘ahumanu Homes, and the numerous other public housing complexes slated for development. The process of relocation and the right to return must be stronger – and must be enforceable – as we face the [massive redevelopment](#) of public housing in Hawai‘i. HB 1325 ensures an enforceable right to return for displaced local residents.

¹ Dillon Ancheta, ‘Help us’: Public Housing Redevelopment Forces 60 Kalihi Tenants to Relocate, HAWAII NEWS NOW, January 23, 2025, <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/01/24/public-housing-redevelopment-forces-60-kalihi-tenants-relocate/>.

² Talia Sibilla, *Kuhio Park Terrace Tenants Say Lives Upended by Relocation*, HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER, February 9, 2025 at B1, <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/02/09/hawaii-news/kuhio-park-terrace-tenants-say-lives-upended-by-relocations/>.

³ Jeremy Hay, *O‘ahu Public Housing Tenants Promised Relocation Help Hit Dead-Ends*, Honolulu Civil Beat, February 27, 2025, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/02/o%ca%bbahu-public-housing-tenants-promised-relocation-help-hit-dead-ends/>.

To ensure that robust relocation services and the right to return remain available to displaced tenants throughout the redevelopment process, I urge you to include the following amendment to HB 1325, HD 3, SD 1 under the proposed language for §201H-38 (a)(1)(E):

- (i) Offer the displaced or evicted tenants the right to return or first preference ~~right of first refusal~~ for a comparable unit available in the proposed housing project at a rate no greater than the amount the tenant was paying in the existing development, subject to inflation, ~~or~~ AND
- (ii) establish a fund and create a relocation program to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance to the displaced or evicted tenants; provided that ~~if the developer opts to provide relocation benefits,~~ the displaced or evicted tenant may choose to receive either three separate payments with each payment equal to no less than one month's rent in a comparable unit or a lump sum equal to no less than three month's rent; provided further that relocation benefits may be provided either as a rent waiver or as a direct cash payment...

The current problems faced by KPT Low-Rise residents exemplify what occurs in the absence of meaningful enforcement – residents are left to self-advocate without clear requirements or accountability. HB 1325, HD 3, SD 1 is a critical step to prevent further displacement of local families, and to begin building accountability into future redevelopment projects in Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1325, HD 3, SD 1.

/s/

Dina Shek

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 11:22:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmela Resuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 2:13:09 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support

Testimony: HB 1325

My name is Rona Mangayayam, Youth Services Director of Kokua Kalihi Valley.

We provide safe spaces for children and youth in Kalihi. And in those spaces, we connect, share stories about who we are, what is going on in our lives and build their capacity not only to strive but thrive as young healers and leaders in this island – a place they and all of us call home.

Back in 2022, when the plan for the KPT low rise redevelopment was presented – we brought some youth in one of our programs. On our way to one of our youths who lives at Low rise ask, “auntie Rona, if we move out from Kalihi, will you still accept us in the youth program?” A question that still keeps ringing to me until this day.

And today, let me share with you the voices of several of our youth in some of our programs who live at low rise KPT and who are directly affected by the ongoing KPT low rise Redevelopment.

One said, “One thing I know it’ll affect is our accessibility to school, work and other resources. We mostly rely on the bus for transportation and here we live close range to bus stops. Our current location is within walking distance of my school, my dad’s work and the pact resource center which has been very helpful to my mom.

Another said, I haven't moved out yet. I have no clue what's going on because my parents don't talk about it. Mom said they would likely move to KamlV, Halawa but I don't know. And he further said: “My friend already moves out and is not able to participate in activities that he used to do, like play basketball at Dole now, unless someone can drive him there and back.

I hope we don't move too far from Kalihi, because I still want to go to the same school with all my friends and if I cannot go to KVIIE. I would be stuck in the house.

My cousin have to move out soon and I think they found a place to live too. In Ewa I think, and now they have to move schools.

And the third one who already move out from KPT Low rise said: “I already move to Halawa. I have to take the bus now to get to school around 5 in the morning to be on time for school. And take the bus back home. I have to say I'm from Halawa when boys there ask where I'm from. I lost a sense of my identity.

And all of them expressed their worries about what is going on in this process of redevelopment.

I am worried about my parents struggling to find a place for us.

I worried about my little brother making friends with the wrong people.

I am worrying about some friends having to move somewhere where they won't be welcome or in danger and concerned about gang affiliation and all.

My parents are worried about having to start over, not having transportation to my dad's job and my mom not knowing where to go for help/resources in a new place. We also don't like the idea of moving away from our neighbors. We have come to love them and we're afraid we may not have that same bond with neighbors if or when we move.

When we asked about their thoughts of the low-rise redevelopment: These are their responses.

1. "I think it's bad for the community. Get some people that can't find a house.
2. Bad for the people. They will lose the house that they have a lot of memories in. I heard too many different things about what is going to happen.
3. I don't really like how they're doing this knowing some people have been here most of their lives, creating memories for generations. To us this is home.

For our youth: the low rise KPT is not just a place or a roof to live- it is home – where they felt love, where they celebrated birthdays, graduations and other milestone in their lives as families and communities. Where they spend time with their kupunas and share stories and laughter.

Lastly, we ask the question, if you have an opportunity to send a message or ask questions to those who have a hand on redevelopment, what would you say or ask.

1. Are we coming back?
2. When will you guys be done?
3. Why are you guys kicking us out?
4. Are they going to help us find a house, or do we have to find it ourselves? Can you help us with a Uhaul?
5. How will you help people that you are kicking out?

I believe passing this bill to guarantee these families the right to return is one huge step in helping these families and other families / youth who would be affected in the many future redevelopments.

Please listen to these youth and answer their questions by passing this bill. Mahalo.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:40:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
May Sinhvongsa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senate Committees,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1325 to protect our local families.

As a Community Health Worker at Kokua Kalihi Valley, I hear firsthand the confusion and distress caused by misinformation and false assurances from redevelopment partners and HPHA regarding relocation and the right to return. Many residents have been led to believe they will receive proper relocation assistance and a guaranteed right to return if they choose to do so, only to be met with unclear information and unfulfilled promises. Families who have lived in KPT Low-Rise for generations are now at risk of displacement, unsure if they will have a home & community to return to once redevelopment begins.

Additionally, KPT Low-Rise residents lack adequate language access and support, making it even more difficult for them to navigate the complex relocation process. Many residents speak languages other than English and struggle to get clear, reliable information about their housing rights and future living situations. Without proper language access, these families are left vulnerable to miscommunication and uncertainty. Not only for KPT Low-Rise resident but also for other residents in future redevelopment housing project.

We need this bill to **ensure that long-time residents are not forced out** to make way for new “affordable housing” developments that often become unaffordable for the very people they are meant to serve.

I also support an amendment to require that developers provide both the "**right of first refusal**" and **robust relocation benefits (Section 201H-38 (1)(E)(i))**. We must ensure that the right to return is **not just a promise, but a protected guarantee** under this bill. Please consider and support **HB1325** for our local families for the future, thank you.

Mahalo,

May Sinhvongsa

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:28:13 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
June Talia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Mahalo,

To all who may have been able to take the time out of your busy schedules to read another heartfelt letter of request concerning HB 1325.

Regarding the community of Kuhio Homes and Kuhio Low-Rise which is scheduled for redevelopment this year. My Name is June Talia a resident due in the second phase for redevelopment. I am not opposed to the redevelopment, I am more opposed to the treatment of the residents in this first phase which have been feeling betray and belittled, tossed and turned from their situated place of residency to a place of disgrace!

Apparently the promises of agreement made by HPHA and Seneca Real Estate Services, which is known to the residents as the relocation people hired by HPHA or The Michaels Organization, is no longer the developers for Kuhio Homes and Kuhio Low-Rise, but will still manage Kuhio Homes and Low-Rise after all is said and done with the redevelopment. "What's up with dat? Please help me understand why?"

Not to mention the rudeness from Hawaii Affordable Properties Management L.L.C., contracted by HPHA to manage Kuhio Homes and Low-Rise until further ado. She the head manager "Randeatte McEnroe" is said to be so rude! by residents. "Cracks, I tell you, cracks!"

Promises of agreements made by HPHA and Seneca to accommodate residents for the first phase with satisfaction has become more like a nightmare of frustration with stress!

Still till this very present day some residents are still finding it hard to seek out adequate living accommodations for their size of family, even with the Section 8 voucher. And time is of the essence "ride or die" no ifs or whats about it, eviction will take place. Which leads me to think "hopefully not more homeless?"

So please bear in mind that 8 or more housing development projects are rising up soon!

Therefore, if HPHA and these privatized development companies cannot get their strategic planning and acts of words together, I see a lot of Excedrin for migraine headaches approaching legislators way.

My closing thoughts and prayers to you all who we consider the watch men over the Islands and its people, is to let it be said, let it be written:

#1. No “subject to change” without adequate notice to all residents.

#2. Shall always have updated meetings, with the right people who can answer the tenants questions, right up till the very month of project actions. And no more sending people who will be thrown under the bus for giving wrong answers!

#3. More transparency.

#4. Written guarantee for right to return if resident is in good standing or has corrected the wrong.

#5. More professionalism in being kind and courteous in serving people.

#6. Adequate living accommodations for sure!

These are just a few of my requests. I’m sure others will state their issues as well.

Last but not least, if by chance the words of my written statement may remain in the mind of the reader or readers, may it be allowed to help or be of some added assistance for other housing residents next in line for redevelopment that may face the same challenges.

Until then, I say Aloha Oe.

Another concerned Aunty!

Pau.

p.s. With all the federal cuts, I hope we no end up half okole.

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:36:39 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lenda Tominiko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning Senators,

My name is Lenda M Tominiko. I live in Kuhio Park Terrace Lowrise. I'm not at all happy with what is happening in my community. Due to a lack of information sharing when the first phase of relocation began, we don't trust what Micheals Development did and we don't want future developers to do the same. I would humbly ask that Micheals does not become the resident manager of the new development.

They were unable to monitor the people who had to move out, they provided poor direction to comparable homes for relocation, and they didn't help the families with homes that were decent and liveable.

When the 60 families were asked to move for the first phase of redevelopment they were not given, in writing, the right to return. We asked for the first 60 families to have the 1st choice to return to the property if they want, and no answers were given in writing. We need a manager company that would come out with the residents and see how we can work together to better our community.

I truly feel that they should remodel the inside of the 60 units because the outside is still solidly standing. That would save the redevelopment a lot of money, plus it will take less time for the families to move back. Then they can start on phase 2 instead of fixing phase 1 first and taking two to three years to fix it, and we were told it will take another seven years to build our homes. This would look un-unified over the course of almost 10 years.

Thank you Senator Dela Cruz and Senators for your time.

Much Mahalo and God Bless

Lenda Tominiko

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:44:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anna Harmon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am testifying in support of this bill. A year ago, I was living in a rental home that was under market rate due to its poor state and location near a loud roads and a gas station. I will admit the situation wasn't great, but it was all we could find after months of searching for something in our budget, and it also gave us access to other resources and community. Then we heard our lot was for sale. As an 'ohana that has faced displacement due to the sale of a property, it was terrifying and concerning. We didn't know where we would go -- everything in our area was priced higher than what most financial advisors would say we should pay. Indeed, the homes that are most affordable to rent in Hawaii are often the ones vulnerable to sales for profit or to converting to more profitable housing, leaving those who need access to affordable housing in a lurch. I believe the state and developers working with the state to develop affordable housing do not intend to take away affordable housing from people who need affordable housing, as the whole goal is to provide for those exact people. This bill provides guidelines and support for how to ensure everyone is benefiting from the state's important efforts to ensure housing is available at an affordable rate for people who live here.

Mahalo, Anna Harmon

HB-1325-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 9:51:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Seikai Darcy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TO: Joint Senate Committee on Ways and Means/Judiciary

RE: **Strong Support HB1325 HD3 SD1**

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference

Tuesday, April 1st, 2025, 10:00AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

My name is Lisa Darcy from Kula, Maui HI, and I am writing in **strong support of HB1325 HD3 SD1**. This measure creates a balanced approach to managing resident displacement in new affordable developments, establishing critical protections for existing community members while facilitating necessary affordable housing construction.

Having 40 years of experience with those displaced from lack of financial, emotional, and structural resources, when residents face displacement, they risk long-term adverse impacts to health, education, and finances while communities risk unraveling the social bonds that give our neighborhoods their strength and character.

When long-time residents face displacement, they risk long-term adverse impacts to health, education, and finances while communities risk unraveling the social bonds that give our neighborhoods their strength and character. My life's work has been focused on how to prevent and keep residents housed so education, financial supports, supportive relationships are maintained. When they fail, ER's, police, and family units are strained to the point they break. Hawaii is experiencing this. Urgent action is needed.

HB1325 HD3 SD1 guarantees displaced individuals priority access to comparable units in the new development at affordable rates, ensuring they can return to their community once construction is complete. If the right to return for these tenants is not offered, the legislation mandates the creation of a dedicated fund providing three months of relocation support, alleviating the economic strain on affected families. These measures transform what could be a destabilizing experience into a well-managed transition with clear outcomes.

Too often developers make promises or are required to provide housing, services and community benefits, and then do not deliver on these promises. It is important to establish mechanisms to hold developers accountable to these promises.

By establishing these mechanisms, HB1325 prevents anti-development sentiment from growing. Hawai'i's affordable housing crisis requires new development to ease the cost burdens associated with insufficient supply. Yet, when our community sees local families displaced to make way for new development, and the process to respectfully relocate families is not followed, it makes our community less in favor of development of any kind and adds to the sentiment that Hawai'i is being changed to benefit outside interests, and development is not in favor of our community.

While data shows that increased housing supply helps moderate price growth and reduces overall displacement pressure, the immediate impact of construction on existing residents can generate significant neighborhood opposition. These growing oppositional sentiments affect our ability to develop and further restrict our ability to mitigate increasing housing costs. This legislation bridges that gap by acknowledging and addressing immediate community concerns while enabling essential housing development to proceed.

This bill requires no state funds, and has no revenue costs to the state. HB1325 SD11 does not require the state to spend any money or use any state funds. Instead, it just requires that developers who use state and federal funds or streamlining processes and exemptions from fees to make sure they properly provide relocation counseling, support, and a right to return to our local community first. This bill was modeled after the State of Georgia requirements for any developer of affordable housing. We need to ask more of our developers like other states already do.

By supporting HB1325 SD1, you can help forge a path toward housing development that serves both current and future generations of Hawai'i residents. This legislation demonstrates that we can achieve meaningful housing growth while preserving the community connections that make our neighborhoods unique.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i

HB1325 SD1 RELATING TO HOUSING

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Committee on Judiciary

April 1, 2025, 10:00am, Room 211

Aloha mai e Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads and members of the committee:

The Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i provides free, direct legal services to patients in community health settings. Many of our clients are low-income tenants and tenants in public housing projects. We testify in **SUPPORT** for **HB1325 SD1** and offer **important amendments** to clarify the right to return or preference to protect local families from permanent displacement. **We would ask that the bill be HELD if the committee does not clarify the requirement for the right to return.** We must enact a preference for local families for all projects, and **not let developers choose to buy out this preference when families would rather return.**

Currently, there are almost no clear and enforceable state-level displacement protections for tenants in projects that are being redeveloped under state-funded government programs. Most importantly, while federal law provides some long-term relocation assistance tenants displaced by the demolition of public housing, there are no clear requirements ensuring displaced tenants receive first preference or the right to return. Learning from current redevelopment projects that have displaced tenants, **our state law must move swiftly to project and prioritize our community by enacting state requirements that include all three prongs of effective anti-displacement programs: (1) offer tenants relocation assistance, (2) provide robust relocation counseling, and (3) offer the right to return or first preference for families in the new development.**

The most important part of this bill is the requirement of a right to return. Without an explicit legal requirement guaranteeing a preference or right to return, tenants are left relying on [promises made in funding documents](#), hoping they will be allowed back into their communities. This issue has become abundantly clear during the redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace low-rise, where a private developer is undertaking a \$200M+ project that will displace hundreds of current tenants. These tenants are now just a month away from being forced to move, with many lacking clear options for housing, despite prior assurances of relocation assistance and a guaranteed right to return.¹

Other jurisdictions, such as Georgia's Department of Community Affairs – an agency equivalent to our HHFDC – provide clear relocation plans, community engagement, and assistance to ensure their most vulnerable residents are not left behind during the

¹ Dillon Ancheta, "'Help us': Public housing redevelopment forces 60 Kalihi tenants to relocate," available at <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/01/24/public-housing-redevelopment-forces-60-kalihi-tenants-relocate/>



creation of new 'affordable housing' developments². Most importantly, Georgia also enforces clear penalties against developers who fail to provide the required assistance.

As our state increasingly moves to implement and build affordable housing through public-private partnerships – similar to the privatization and redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace low-rise – it is essential that new laws be enacted to protect local tenant families from displacement. **Without HB1325 SD1, our displaced local families are forced to compete just to return to a community they lived in for generations.** HB1325 SD1 is needed to make clear that developers receiving state government subsidies must take the time to ensure that displaced families receive services, and a clear and operationalized right to return to the project in their community first.

To further strengthen and clarify the need for robust and complete anti-displacement provisions similar to other states, amendments are needed to explicitly require developers to provide all components of relocation assistance **and** the right to return.

Amendment:

Clarify that developers must guard against displacement by provided all three prongs of a robust displacement program: the right to return, relocation assistance, **and** relocation counseling.³

"(E) If the proposed housing project will result in the displacement or eviction of tenant households living in units whose value is affordable to families earning one hundred forty per cent or below of the applicable area median income, the developer of the proposed housing project shall:

- (i) Offer the displaced or evicted tenants the **right to return or first preference** for a comparable unit available in the proposed housing project at a rate no greater than the amount the tenant was paying in the existing development, subject to inflation, **AND**
- (ii) Establish a fund and create a relocation program to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance to the displaced or evicted tenants; provided that if the developer opts to provide relocation benefits, the displaced or evicted tenant may choose to receive either three separate

² See Georgia Department of Community Affairs available at: <https://dca.georgia.gov/affordable-housing/housing-development/housing-tax-credit-program/qualified-allocation-plans-and-12>

³ See Georgia Department of Community Affairs Relocation Manual, available at: <https://dca.georgia.gov/document/qualified-allocation-plans-gaps/2024relocationmanualpdf/download>



Medical-Legal Partnership
for Children in Hawai'i

payments with each payment equal to no less than one month's rent in a comparable unit or a lump sum equal to no less than three month's rent; provided further that relocation benefits may be provided either as a rent waiver or as a direct cash payment;

Accordingly, I respectfully ask that you **AMEND HB1325 SD1** and consider the proposed amendments modeled from other jurisdictions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Deja Ostrowski, Esq.
Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i
808-728-0004; dejao@hawaii.edu



KŌKUA KALIHI VALLEY COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY SERVICES

2239 N. SCHOOL STREET ♦ HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819 ♦ TEL: 808-791-9400 ♦ FAX: 808-848-0979

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and Committee members,

Kokua Kalihi Valley, CFS, provides medical, health and a variety of social services to the Kalihi community with a high percentage of patients and participants residing in Kalihi public housing projects. The past three years of Kuhio Homes redevelopment planning between the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority and Michaels Development Corporation has created housing uncertainty and very real displacement risks for our patients, neighbors and even some of our staff who are Kuhio Park Terrace (KPT) tenants. We testify in **Strong Support of HB1325 HD1** to provide state protection for long term Kalihi residents facing permanent displacement from their homes and community.

Our state law must move to protect and prioritize our community first, by enacting state requirements that include all three prongs of good anti-displacement programs: (1) offer tenants relocation assistance, (2) provide robust relocation counseling, and (3) offer the right to return or first preference for families in the new development.

While we recognize the need for new affordable housing development, these public-private partnerships which use our public monies should prioritize the housing needs of those with roots in the community, not move them out to provide new improved housing for others. The Kuhio Homes-Kuhio Park Terrace redevelopment is the first of several planned large public-private redevelopments. As the first community exposed to this development process we have witnessed the need for much better protections for displaced residents and significantly greater inclusion of community residents and stakeholders in the development process. We ask you to support this bill and contribute to an affordable housing approach that includes our low income and public housing tenant neighbors in the process. The experiences of the community have revealed the necessity to provide broad relocation assistance and counseling necessary to manage the needs of displaced and impacted families with children in nearby schools, medical homes in the community, and support networks of family and friends in the immediate neighborhood.

Please pass HB1325 in its strongest form to ensure no vulnerable community is displaced to make way for others.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony,

Jesse Lipman
Roots Program Director, Kokua Kalihi Valley, CFS
jlipman@kkv.net



Adult Friends for Youth

"Redirecting lives to stop Violence"

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M.S.W.*

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Testimony on HB1325 SD1

Submitted to: Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
AND
Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

From: Debbie Spencer-Chun, President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth (AFY).

In strong support of HB1325 SD1.

I support an amendment to require that developer provide both the "right to first refusal and provide robust "relocation benefits." (Section 201H-37(1) E(i)). We must ensure the right to return is protected by this bill.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to testify. My testimony is based on my conversations with residents and my meetings with other community organizations, government staff and leaders, and concerned citizens.

When I met with residents back in December regarding the new redevelopment of Kuhio Park Terrace, there were many concerns, such as:

1. There was a lack of communication and/or miscommunication between them and the developer, Hawaii Housing Public Authority, and Seneca, the contracted company to help them relocate. They were getting different information from different sources. This lack of communication and/or miscommunication caused confusion, apprehension, a lack of trust, and, in some cases, anxiety.
 - We need to have a better mechanism to help these residents relocate.
2. The lack of communication or reassurance that they will have the right or opportunity to return.
 - We need a better mechanism to help these residents understand their legal and moral rights to return to the new redevelopment upon completion. They need reassurance, especially our kupuna. (Note: Maintaining contact via a website is not the answer. I don't know about you, but at AFY, we sometimes have a hard time keeping our website updated to provide the most accurate information daily. How or who will keep this website updated accurately daily for these residents to get information? It's possible that it will not happen.)

3. The disruption of their children's education, especially if they must move out of the district.
 - We need a point of contact from the DOE to work directly with these impacted families. (Note: I know this is a housing issue, but it impacts various facets of the residents' lives.)
4. Safety concerns.
 - We need to have a mechanism in place that is knowledgeable of various aspects of the residents' concerns. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution.
(Note: I know it is easy to just say to place them in different public housing in the same or other communities, but it is not that simple. There is a history between public housing complexes that could potentially be dangerous. Again, I know this is a housing issue, but we need to consider these things.)

Other comments: Other public housing projects will be redeveloped very soon, and we hope to prevent these situations from reoccurring. We have a large homeless problem in Hawaii, and if we don't get this right, I worry that others will fall into this category. I also agree with some of the other testimonies already submitted.

Mahalo for your time. I appreciate you allowing me to share my mana'o.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Spencer-Chun