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KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 22, 2025

TO: The Honorable Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 244 HD1 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: February 24, 2025, 12:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the measure and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests that any appropriation align with and not reduce or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: This bill appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with contracted community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the State. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

The Committee on Human Services and Homelessness amended the measure by:

- (1) Inserting language to ensure equitable distribution of allocated funds to the various divisions within the Department of Human Services with contracted community-based organizations;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

The Committee on Human Services and Homelessness also noted in its committee report suggested appropriation amounts and program IDs.

February 22, 2025

Page 2

DHS understands that the true cost of providing contracted services has increased faster than appropriations and contracted amounts. This results in community-based organizations having to fundraise, hire less staff, or reduce the number of people served by the contract.

DHS respectfully requests clarification if the Legislature intends that the appropriation be directed toward a particular program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.

HB-244-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 2:19:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marilyn Yamamoto	Hawaii Coalition for Child Protective Reform	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Yamashita and committee,

Having spent the entire last year in Malama Ohana meetings to improve CWS, I would have preferred that the targeted funding in this bill would be toward CBO's that would help to prevent family involvement in child abuse or neglect investigations. I can't tell for sure if that's the case in the committee report, but would be more comfortable to know what the funding is supposed to accomplish.



HB244 HD1 DHS Funds for Social Services

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Monday, Feb 24, 2025: 12:00: Room 308 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB244 HD1:

ALOHA CHAIR, VICE CHAIR, AND DISTINGUISHED COMMITTEE MEMBERS. My name is Alan Johnson. I am the current chair of the Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition (HSAC), a statewide organization for substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health disorder treatment and prevention agencies and recovery-oriented services.

There is a significant need for more residential and intensive outpatient services for individuals with co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use disorders) in Hawaii.

While state funding has been reduced for formal treatment for this population, the state faces unique challenges, including a high cost of living, a shortage of mental health and addiction treatment providers, and a large homeless population—many of whom struggle with co-occurring disorders.

Despite the rising need for more funding, the state recently and significantly reduced funding for residential and outpatient, especially for co-occurring disorder treatment (mental health and substance abuse).

Why More Services Are Needed:

1. High Rates of Co-Occurring Disorders

- Many individuals experiencing homelessness in Hawaii have both mental health and substance use disorders needing long-term recovery support.

2. Limited Availability of Residential Treatment

- Funding is needed to sustain these programs because there are only a few dedicated residential programs that offer integrated care for both conditions.
- Many existing programs focus on either mental health or substance use but not both, leading to gaps in care.

3. Barriers to Accessing Care.

- Insurance and funding constraints limit the number of available treatment beds.

4. Geographic Challenges

- Services are often concentrated in Honolulu, leaving rural communities and outer islands underserved.

Possible Solutions

1. **Expand state funding for residential treatment beds** with integrated mental health and substance use care.
2. **Increase funding for dual-diagnosis programs, including outpatient as well as residential** through Medicaid, state grants, and federal support.
3. **Develop more community-based step-down housing** to help individuals transition from residential care to independent living.
4. **Improve coordination between mental health, addiction treatment, and housing services** to provide long-term support.

Hawai'i's Medicaid program (Med-QUEST) has received increased funding in recent years, such as a \$25 million expansion for adult dental benefits, but additional investment is needed to strengthen behavioral health services. Efforts are underway to support workforce development and increase the number of providers through partnerships and loan forgiveness programs.

Advocating for more co-occurring disorder residential services in Hawaii is essential for reducing homelessness, improving public health, and breaking the cycle of crisis care. Expanding Medicaid funding for behavioral health services is not just a healthcare issue—it's a social and economic imperative that improves outcomes and reduces long-term public costs.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony and are available for further questions.



February 21, 2025

Hawai'i House Committee on Finance
Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Representatives Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Daniel Holt, Ikaika Hussey, Sue L. Keohokapu-Lee Loy,
Lisa Kitagawa, Matthias Kusch, Rachele F. Lamosao, Mike Lee, Tyson K. Miyake, Dee Morikawa,
Shirley Ann Templo, David Alcos III, Julie Reyes Oda, and Gene Ward, Committee Members

RE: HB 244 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

I am submitting this letter in support of HB 244 on behalf of Easterseals Hawaii. Easterseals Hawaii served 2,025 Hawaii community members with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in 2024. Our purpose is to create a more equitable world where people with I/DD can choose their own path.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) like Easterseals Hawaii are a lifeline for many individuals with I/DD in Hawaii. CBOs have been shown to reduce barriers to care, uplift health outcomes, and to decrease costly inefficiencies by providing upstream solutions.¹ Despite mounting evidence in support of CBOs and rising demand for our services, CBOs struggle to stay afloat due to government contract rates remaining below actual service costs. In fact, CBO contract rates have not increased in over a decade and 40% of CBOs report that they may cease operations if funding challenges persist.² Please help CBOs like Easterseals Hawaii continue to provide essential services for individuals with I/DD in Hawaii by voting in support of HB 244.

Easterseals Hawaii supports HB 244 and respectfully requests your “aye” vote.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this letter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Liebert Lewis".

Rachel Liebert Lewis
Director, Public Policy and Advocacy
Easterseals Hawaii
PublicPolicyAndAdvocacy@eshawaii.org

¹ copehealthsolutions.com/cblog/role-of-cbos-to-reduce-health-care-access-barriers-and-enhance-clinical-outcomes/

² <https://hitruccost.com/resources/2022-survey-results/>

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244, HD 1

TO: Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, & FIN Committee Members

FROM: Nikos Leverenz
Policy & Advancement Manager

DATE: February 24, 2025 (12:00 PM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) **strongly supports** HB 244, HD 1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to better collaborate with community-based organizations to address the ongoing need for social services.

HHHRC provides homelessness services in Regions 1 and 6 on O'ahu and is a member of [Partners in Care \(PIC\)](#), a planning, coordinating, and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within O'ahu's continuum of care for homeless persons. In alignment with PIC and other non-profit members of the [True Cost Coalition](#), we met with legislators and supported legislative efforts last year to increase baseline funding for work that is outlined in multi-year service contracts.

Recruitment and retention of frontline staff have become increasingly difficult with flatlined salary structures and acute increases in the cost of living in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many employees, including those with valuable lived experience with homelessness, behavioral health issues, and criminal legal system involvement, have taken part-time jobs in the service sector or have departed our agency for full-time service sector employment.

HHHRC's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawai'i and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions, and have also been deeply impacted by trauma related to histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

TO: Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi & Members of House Committee on Finance
FROM: Renae Hamilton-Cambeilh, YWCA Kaua'i Executive Director
DATE: February 21, 2025

RE: In Support of HB 244

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee on Finance

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony for HB 244, On behalf of the YWCA staff and the individuals and families we serve, **I am testifying in strong support of HB 244**, which appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to increase allocation for contracts with community-based organizations providing critical services in Hawaii. YWCA Kaua'i has a long history of being contracted by DHS to provide services related to domestic and sexual violence for our community. These contracted services assist survivors and child witnesses cope through their trauma, heal from abuse, and rebuild safe and self-sufficient households. We also provide the only Family Violence Shelter and Crisis Intervention services for DV and SA victims on Kauai. It is vital for these types of services that staff who provide direct client services be well experienced and knowledgeable in these specialized areas. Our services save lives, and provide long term support for the survivors trying to healing from these traumatic experiences and crimes.

The Judiciary has been the primary funder for these vital services for over 25 years, during this period the funding has not risen to meet the yearly rising costs of providing services. The YWCA has taken steps in an attempt to patchwork the funding needed for service delivery, this is simply not sustainable and the gap grows each year. It is to the point that the agency, after this fiscal year the agency will not be able to provide all services that have been required if funding is not increased. We simply are not able to retain the staffing required with inadequate funding. We've taken steps of eliminating positions and putting into place a hiring freeze to keep costs at a minimum. These actions did not occur all at once, it has been building over the years due to stagnant DHS funding and fewer outside options to secure needed funding

In this bill, DHS acknowledges the need for increased funding, in 2024 DHS testified that a 20% increase is needed to shore up funding and meet some of the ongoing rising costs. I support this bill as it is necessary to address the stagnant funding to ensure our state has services in place for the most vulnerable individuals and families. Mahalo for your consideration to support HB 244.

Respectfully,
Renae Hamilton-Cambeilh, Executive Director



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive
Director

Network Membership

Access to Independence
Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i
Bobby Benson Center
Child and Family Service
Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i
Domestic Violence Action Center
EPIC `Ohana, Inc.
Friends of the Children's Justice
Center of Maui
Get Ready Hawai`i
Hale Kipa, Inc.
Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.
Hawai`i Children's Action
Network
Hawai`i Health & Harm
Reduction Center
Hawaii Island Community`
Health Center
Ho`ola Na Pua
Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i
Ka Hale Pomaika`i
Kokua Kalihi Valley
Kaua`i Planning and Action
Alliance
Lines for Life Youth Line
Maui Youth and Family Services
Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native
Hawaiian Health Care
Systems
P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.
Parents and Children Together
PHOCUSED
Piha Wellness and Healing
Planned Parenthood of the
Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana
Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)
Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center
The Catalyst Group

February 21, 2025

To: Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
And members of the Committee on Finance

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244 HD1 RELATING TO THE , DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations including children, youth, and young adults, need the educational, vocational, family strengthening, and other services provided by CBOs. We all want our children to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed. It takes a network of trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and accessible services to enable our young people to make successful transitions to adulthood.

The most recent ALICE report by Aloha United Way noted that 37% of households said that someone in their family is considering moving out of state. 85% of families said it was simply the high cost of living in Hawai'i, and 73% said it was because of the high cost of housing,

CBOs struggle to attract and retain qualified staff. When contracts and grants do not pay the full cost of providing services, workers leave for higher paying jobs or places with a lower cost of living. It is shameful that wages are so low that a portion of Hawaii's CBO staff receive SNAP and other public assistance benefits. Staff working with homeless persons are concerned about becoming homeless themselves. One outreach worker shared with me, "If my landlord raises my rent, I won't be able to afford my housing." In 2024, The Salvation Army Family Intervention Services stopped admitting clients to its emergency shelter for boys on Maui due to critical staffing shortages.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



Parents And Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244 HD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, & Members,
House Committee on Finance
FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO
DATE: February 24, 2025 at 12:00 PM

Parents And Children Together (PACT) strongly supports HB 244 HD1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the State.

We submit this testimony as a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition – over 50 community-based non-profit organizations fighting to sustain essential social services for our communities. The people of our community are strong, resilient and capable yet challenged by systems of scarcity that are difficult to overcome without targeted support. They must be supported by high-quality organizations that are sustainable, and state funding is an important part of that. State contracts that have not increased over time as operating costs increase make this important work unsustainable. We support increases to these contracts because the need for social services in our state is higher than ever.

Founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968, PACT is 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 rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



House Committee on Finance
February 24, 2025 at 12:00PM
Room 308

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB244 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO), I am writing in **strong support of HB244**, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations.

The Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) is a statewide, sector-wide professional association of nonprofits that works to strengthen and unite the nonprofit sector as a collective force to improve the quality of life in Hawai'i. Since 2006, HANO has been a leading voice for the nonprofit sector, leveraging resources, educating and advocating for policies and practices that promote the professionalism, sustainability, and effectiveness of nonprofits and the communities they serve.

Hawai'i relies on nonprofit and community-based organizations to provide vital social services to its most vulnerable residents. However, the ability of these organizations to deliver these critical services effectively depends on fair funding and strong partnerships between the government and nonprofit providers.

HANO supports this bill as an essential step in addressing Hawai'i's increasing social service needs. By closing the current funding gap in nonprofit contracts, Hawai'i can enhance access to critical services like benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness support, all while strengthening community stability and well-being.

In addition, with the ongoing uncertainty around federal funding for social services, Hawai'i must act quickly to protect the stability of essential programs through the Department of Human Services. Federal funding can be inconsistent, and any reductions could disproportionately affect key services. This bill is crucial for ensuring that Hawai'i's residents continue to receive the services they rely on, regardless of changes in federal programs and funding availability.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244, HD1:
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing Date: Monday, February 24, 2025 at 12pm, CR 308

Subject: Support for HB 244, HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **Strong Support of HB 244, HD1**, which seeks additional funding for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to strengthen its collaboration with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

CCH is a tax-exempt, Community-Based Organization that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years. We serve children, families, elders, individuals experiencing homelessness, veterans, and immigrants, guided by our mission to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in our community. CCH has a long-standing commitment to affordable housing, homelessness solutions, and child welfare.

As a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition, representing CBOs that serve over 500,000 people statewide, we recognize the critical role these organizations play in supporting Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents. However, stagnant funding and rising operational costs and now the uncertainty of federal funding has pushed CBOs to a breaking point.

Given the uncertainty surrounding federal funding for essential social service programs, Hawai'i must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services delivered through DHS. Potential federal budget cuts threaten programs that address homelessness, health, and support services to children and families, leaving thousands at risk. HB 244, HD 1 is a necessary step to safeguard these essential services, ensuring that Hawai'i families continue to receive the support they need, regardless of shifts in federal funding.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i strongly supports HB 244, HD1 as it directly addresses a pressing funding shortfall that, if left unaddressed, could jeopardize the well-being of countless residents. We urge you to pass this measure and make a crucial investment in Hawai'i's future.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact our Shellie Niles at (808) 527-4813.



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

P.O. Box 37158, Honolulu, HI 96837-0158

Phone/E-Mail: (808) 927-1214 / kat.caphi@gmail.com

Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

Monday, February 24, 2025

Room 308 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

12:00 NOON

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 244 HD1

DHS; FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee!

My name is Kat Brady and I am the Coordinator of Community Alliance on Prisons, a community initiative promoting smart justice policies in Hawai`i for more than two decades. This testimony is respectfully offered on behalf of the 3,700 Hawai`i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as of February 17, 2025. We are always mindful that 936 – 49.6% of Hawai`i's male prison population are serving their sentences abroad -- thousands of miles away from their loved ones, their homes and, for the disproportionate number of incarcerated Kanaka Maoli, far, far from their ancestral lands.

As a proud member of the True Cost Coalition, Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to **strongly support HB 244 HD1** that appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in Hawai`i nei.

Individuals exiting incarceration need a whole host of supports from housing, food, healthcare to name a few in order to transition from incarceration to community life. Hawai`i community-based organizations have nobly filled the pukas in services and for that, we are eternally grateful.

Hawai`i's amazing nonprofits have stepped up to provide the services that are As a member of the True Cost Coalition, Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, February 17, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-02-17.pdf>

opportunity to **strongly support HB 244** that appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in Hawai`i nei.

Individuals exiting incarceration need a whole host of supports from housing, food, healthcare to name a few in order to transition from incarceration to community life. Hawai`i community-based organizations have nobly filled the pukas in services and for that, we are eternally grateful.

Hawai`i's amazing nonprofits have stepped up to provide the services that are desperately needed and As a member of the True Cost Coalition, Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to **strongly support HB 244 HD1** that appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in Hawai`i nei.

Individuals exiting incarceration need a whole host of supports from housing, food, healthcare to name a few in order to transition from incarceration to community life. Hawai`i community-based organizations have nobly filled the pukas in services and for that, we are eternally grateful.

Hawai`i's amazing nonprofits have stepped up to provide the services that are desperately needed and that the state is unable to provide themselves for communities across our pae `aina. These organizations don't have millions of dollars as a safety net when the government is slow to reimburse them for the services they have provided. They are doing the work of the government, and should not be short-changed because they are doing work they love providing vital services to some of our most vulnerable neighbors and communities.

Here is a snapshot from a 2022 survey of Hawai`i Community-Based Nonprofit Organizations:

- 91% reported government contracts do not cover full operating costs.
 - o 79% had to cut administrative costs.
 - o 56% had to reduce staff salaries.
 - o 87% relied on private funders to close funding gaps.
 - o 23% incurred loan/interest fees while awaiting contract payments (59% were never reimbursed).
- 40% of organizations reported they may cease operations if these funding challenges persist. This would be a big blow to our communities across Hawai`i nei.

The current state of Federal spending certainly is a clarion call for the state to step up to their responsibilities for the people. We pay our taxes so that the government can deliver the services that communities need by itself or through their contracts with community-based organizations. The new federal administration has cut federal

spending, creating significant uncertainty for communities, programs and services. This reinforces the urgency to address local funding shortfalls to protect Hawai`i's most vulnerable residents.

Community Alliance on Prisons respectfully asks our legislature to step up to increase the contracts with these community-based organizations by 20% as the Department of Human Services has determined is needed to meet the demands for services.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our thoughts. Community Alliance on Prisons hopes that our legislature will step up to increase the contracts by 20% so that Hawai`i can deliver the services and the Aloha spirit to our struggling neighbors and communities.

Mahalo nui!

Hawai'i True Cost Coalition

Date: February 24, 2025

Re: Strong Support of HB244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Our coalition of organizations for Hawai'i True Cost Coalition are writing in strong support of HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services. This bill appropriates funds for the department of human services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the State.

The Hawai'i True Cost Coalition is an alliance of over 70 community-based nonprofit organizations serving more than 500,000 residents statewide. Since its establishment in 2020, the coalition has focused on strengthening collaboration between nonprofits and the state to ensure taxpayer funds are allocated equitably and efficiently. By advocating for sustainable funding solutions, the coalition helps safeguard critical services for Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations, including children, kupuna, individuals experiencing homelessness, and survivors of domestic violence. These efforts are essential to ensuring that nonprofit organizations can continue providing the vital care and support on which so many residents rely.

Hawai'i's safety net often goes unnoticed—until it begins to fray. This safety net consists of community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) that provide essential services to tens of thousands of residents every day. These organizations offer shelter for at-risk youth, meals for kupuna, aid for survivors of domestic violence, and countless other supports that touch every corner of the state. Without immediate action, many of these programs could disappear entirely, leaving some of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents without the critical support they need to thrive.

HB 244 HD1 addresses funding gaps for the Department of Human Services (DHS), enabling stronger partnerships with CBOs and sustaining essential services. Increased DHS funding ensures Hawai'i families receive housing assistance, food security, youth support, and care for low-income households. This measure promotes community well-being while strengthening Hawai'i's social safety net for the future. Investing now secures vital support for years to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Adult Friends for Youth | Aloha Harvest | Aloha United Way (AUW) | AlohaCare | Arc of Kona | Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawaii | Blueprint for Change | Catholic Charities Hawaii | Child and Family Service | Community Alliance on Prisons | Domestic Violence Action Center | Easter Seals | Epic `Ohana | Family Promise of Hawai'i | Full Life | Girl Scouts of Hawaii | Going Home Hawaii | Goodwill Hawaii | Hale Kipa | Hale `Opio Kaua'i | Hawai'i International Film Festival | Hawai'i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) | Hawai'i Children's Action Network (HCAN) | Hawai'i Food Bank | Hawai'i Health and Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) | Hawai'i Meals On Wheels | Hawai'i Public Health Institute | Hawai'i Youth Services Network | Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence | Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies | Hope Services Hawai'i | Imua Family Services | Institute for Human Services (IHS) | Kalamapi'i Play School | Kinai `Eha | Kumukahi Health and Wellness | Lanakila Pacific | Maui AIDS Foundation | Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO) | Maui Family Support Services | Mental Health Kokua | Mediation Center of the Pacific | Mindful Living Group | Nurturing Wahine Fund | Parents and Children Together (PACT) | Partners In Care (PIC) | Partners In Development Foundation (PIDF) | PATCH | Residential Youth Services and Empowerment (RYSE) | Responsive Caregivers of Hawai'i | Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii | Share Your Mana | The Spirit Horse Ranch | U.S. Vets | Women Helping Women | YMCA of Honolulu

1099 Alakea Street, Suite 2530, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | (808) 447-1840



The Institute for Human Services, Inc.
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

TO: Chair Yamashita
Vice Chair Takenouchi

FROM: Connie Mitchell, Executive Director
IHS, The Institute for Human Services, Inc.

DATE: February 24, 2025

POSITION: IHS supports HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

IHS, The Institute for Human Services, **strong support** of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink. Last year, we saw homeless service providers having to close their doors and for some organizations having to take out lines of credit to keep up with operational costs. Our strategies at IHS have been to broaden our streams of funding to include fee for service contracts. But even those rates have failed to keep up with the cost of covering clinical case management within our shelters or pre-housing navigation.

For over 46 years, IHS has offered critical support to those experiencing homelessness, from emergency shelter and meals to healthcare, job training, and housing. Such services come at a cost that often cannot be passed onto our clients, so we rely on government contracts supplemented with private donations from individuals, businesses, and foundations.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities. Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

To truly end cycles of homelessness, wraparound, holistic solutions are needed. Thus, IHS operates a comprehensive approach to homelessness, including supportive medical and psychiatric care. Our services are rooted in a mission to equip individuals with the skills and resources to live independently in permanent housing for the long term. Hence, we have begun to tap into Medicaid funding to help fill some of the gaps, allowing us to continue delivering our programs. However, the administrative burden of doing so requires building greater capacity to do so and also funding. Mahalo for your leadership in addressing this critical issue and for this opportunity to testify.



Date: Monday, February 24, 2025

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB 244 HD1 which increases funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and ensure the service it depends upon CBOs to administer can be adequately funded.

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, funding levels have not kept pace with rapidly rising operational and staffing costs, and crises like the Maui wildfires have pushed these organizations to the brink.

This bill is a necessary step toward strengthening collaborations with CBOs, which will improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while helping the State to meet its ambitious goals for stability and well-being in our communities

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

Aloha United Way and the True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that is jeopardizing critical services for Hawaii families and must be addressed.

We urge you to pass HB 244 HD1 measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Date: February 24, 2025

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB 244 HD1** with the goal of securing additional funding for the Department of Human Services to strengthen its collaboration with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). I am Tina Andrade, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, Community-Based Organization that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years. CCH has programs serving children, families, elders, homeless, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i. Catholic Charities Hawai'i has a long history of working in the areas of affordable housing, homelessness, and child welfare.

We are a member of the Hawai'i True Cost Coalition, comprised of Community-Based Organization, serving over 500,000 people across the state. Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—including children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those requiring social services—depend significantly on the support provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding and increasing operational costs, particularly in the aftermath of crises such as the Maui wildfires, have brought these organizations to a critical breaking point.

With the continued uncertainty surrounding federal funding for social service programs, Hawaii must act decisively to secure the stability of essential services delivered through the Department of Human Services. Fluctuations in federal resources, including potential funding cuts, could severely affect programs addressing homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill serves as a vital measure to ensure that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations consistently receive the assistance they need, regardless of changes in the federal budget.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 as it tackles a pressing funding shortfall that, if unaddressed, would endanger the essential services relied upon by Hawaii families. We strongly encourage you to pass this measure and make a vital investment in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents. Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Tina Andrade, President and CEO of Catholic Charities Hawai'i



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS ■ 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813





91-1841 Fort Weaver Road
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www.childandfamilyservice.org

Amanda Pump
President & CEO
Child & Family Service
February 24, 2025

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Kauai United Way
Maui United Way
Hawaii Island United Way

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Child and Family Service to show our **strong support** of HB 244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Through the utilization of our core H.O.P.E. values (Humility, Ownership, Perseverance, and Engagement), our program aims to help Hawaii's most vulnerable populations to strengthen families and foster the healthy development of children. Children, individuals experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic violence, and many other groups rely on the safety nets provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that may jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on.

This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's communities continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Amanda Pump
President & CEO
Child & Family Service



"We're all about FAMILY"

Mission: Strengthening Families and Fostering the Healthy Development of Children



Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

EPIC 'Ohana has served communities, families, young adults, and children impacted by the foster care system statewide, for almost thirty years. The need for critical supports has never been more urgent as Child Welfare Services faces an almost 40% vacancy rate and a newly released legislative working group report that highlights the need for sweeping reforms.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawai'i must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawai'i families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents.

Mahalo nui loa for considering this important legislation.

Me Ka Ha'aha'a (With Humility),

Delia Parker Ulima

Executive Director, EPIC 'Ohana

Katy Chen
President/CEO
Goodwill Hawaii
2/24/2025

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, people receiving public assistance such as TANF or SNAP benefits, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have significantly impacted the financial sustainability of these organizations. Goodwill Hawaii, as one of the leading CBOs in Hawaii, has to continuously look for other sources of funding to supplement costs associated with Government contracts, and to support our continuous operations.

Goodwill Hawaii has been providing employment, training, and case management services to Hawaii's vulnerable populations since 1959. The populations we serve include people with disabilities, people who are receiving public assistance such as TANF and SNAP benefits, at risk youths, immigrants, low-income families, dislocated workers, and justice involved individuals. Our mission is to help people with employment barriers to reach their full potential and become self-sufficient. We have been receiving funding from the Department of Human Services for over 20 years to provide essential services to adults and youths. For most of the contracts we have with DHS, the contract amount has not increased for years. Despite the stagnant contract fund, we still have to increase staff wages and pay the increase in cost of other expenses such as rent and supplies. The increase in cost has intensified in recent years after the pandemic. As a result, it is harder and harder to operate the programs effectively without enough funding to cover the true cost of operations. We often need to compensate by not paying our staff a competitive wage, which resulted in difficulty in recruitment and high staff turnover due to staff finding better paying positions with for profit companies. Many of our staff moved on to work for the state because of higher wage and better benefits. An increase in contract price is essential for us to operate the program well and to continue providing quality services to the most vulnerable populations in Hawaii. This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with agencies like Goodwill, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Katy Chen
President/CEO
Goodwill Hawaii



REDUCING HARM,
PROMOTING HEALTH,
CREATING WELLNESS,
AND FIGHTING STIGMA
IN HAWAII AND
THE PACIFIC

Letter of Support

February 24, 2025

RE: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB 244 HD1 which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center's mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We focus our efforts on those disproportionately affected by social determinants of health, including but not limited to: people living with and/or affected by HIV, hepatitis, substance use, and the transgender, LGBTQ and the Native Hawaiian communities.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Heather Lusk, LCSW, MSW
Executive Director

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER

677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
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(808) 521-2437

www.hhhrc.org



Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

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IN HAWAI'I AND
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HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: info@hysn.org

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Parents and Children Together
PHOCUSED
Piha Wellness and Healing
Planned Parent
Great Northwest, Hawaii
Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana
Residential Youth Services
& Empowerment (RYSE)
Salvation Army Family
Intervention Services
Sex Abuse Treatment Center
Susannah Wesley Community
Center
The Catalyst Group

February 24, 2025

From: Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director
Hawaii Youth Services Network

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations including children, youth, and young adults, need the educational, vocational, family strengthening, and other services provided by CBOs. We all want our children to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to succeed. It takes a network of trauma-informed, culturally relevant, and accessible services to enable our young people to make successful transitions to adulthood.

The most recent ALICE report by Aloha United Way noted that 37% of households said that someone in their family is considering moving out of state. 85% of families said it was simply the high cost of living in Hawai'i, and 73% said it was because of the high cost of housing,

CBOs struggle to attract and retain qualified staff. When contracts and grants do not pay the full cost of providing services, workers leave for higher paying jobs or places with a lower cost of living. It is shameful that wages are so low that a portion of Hawaii's CBO staff receive SNAP and other public assistance benefits. Staff working with homeless persons are concerned about becoming homeless themselves. One outreach worker shared with me, "If my landlord raises my rent, I won't be able to afford my housing." In 2024, The Salvation Army Family Intervention Services stopped admitting clients to its emergency shelter for boys on Maui due to critical staffing shortages.



THE MEDIATION CENTER OF THE PACIFIC, INC.
Bringing People Together to Talk, Negotiate and Resolve Conflict Creatively

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February 24, 2025

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Tracey S. Wiltgen

From: Tracey Wiltgen, Executive Director
The Mediation Center of the Pacific, Inc.

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Mediation Center of the Pacific (MCP), I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1, which seeks to provide critical funding for the Department of Human Services to strengthen partnerships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). This legislation is essential to ensure that Hawaii's most vulnerable residents, including those in rural and underserved communities, have access to timely and quality services that protect the health of our residents.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening partnerships with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

The uncertainty surrounding federal funding exacerbates the challenges faced by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and the Department of Health. Federal spending levels remain unpredictable, and potential reductions or delays in federal support could further strain Hawaii's health system. Without reliable state funding, CBOs may be forced to scale back critical services, leaving vulnerable populations at greater risk. By passing this bill, Hawaii can ensure a stable, local solution to safeguard access to care, regardless of federal budget fluctuations.

The Mediation Center of the Pacific believes this bill addresses the pressing issue of preserving access to care for thousands of community members. Funding this initiative ensures that CBOs can continue to serve those most in need, improving health outcomes statewide, and strengthening communities.

We urge you to pass HB 244 HD1 to protect and enhance access to critical healthcare services for all Hawaii residents.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Tracey Wiltgen, Executive Director
The Mediation Center of the Pacific

February 24, 2025

From: Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President & CEO
Lanakila Pacific

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Lanakila Pacific, I am writing in strong support of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). Lanakila Pacific has supported vulnerable members of our community for 85 years, ensuring individuals with disabilities and seniors are able to live independently and thrive. We can't continue to be effective without the support of DHS which needs adequate funding for safety net programs.

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of food—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink. This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs, improving access to public benefits, and promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

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Rona Yagi Fukumoto





February 24, 2025

Chair Kyle Yamashita
Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi
House Committee on Finance

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO), Inc. I am writing in strong support of HB 244 HD1, which seeks to provide critical funding for the Department of Human Services to strengthen partnerships with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). This legislation is essential to ensure that Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents, including those in rural and underserved communities such as Hāna, and on the islands of Moloka'i and Lāna'i, have access to timely and quality services that protect the health of our residents.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawai'i's growing social service needs. By strengthening partnerships with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, child care, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

The uncertainty surrounding federal funding exacerbates the challenges faced by Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and the Department of Health. Federal spending levels remain unpredictable, and potential reductions or delays in federal support could further strain Hawai'i's health system. Without reliable state funding, CBOs may be forced to scale back critical services, leaving vulnerable populations at greater risk. By passing this bill, Hawai'i can ensure a stable, local solution to safeguard access to care, regardless of federal budget fluctuations.

MEO believes this bill addresses the pressing issue of preserving access to care for thousands of community members. Funding this initiative ensures that CBOs can continue to serve those most in need, improving health outcomes statewide, and strengthening communities.

We urge you to pass HB 244 HD1 to protect and enhance access to critical health care services for all Hawai'i residents.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership.

Debbie Cabebe

Debbie Cabebe, SHRM-SCP
Chief Executive Officer



PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION

February 24, 2025

From: Shawn Kana'iaupuni, President & CEO
Partners in Development Foundation

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

As President and CEO of Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF), I write expressing strong support for HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to strengthen its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). This legislation is essential to ensure the Hawai'i's most vulnerable, including those in rural and underserved communities, have access to timely and quality service that protects the health of our residents.

The challenges facing our community have grown increasingly complex. Rising demand for services, coupled with stagnant government contract funding and soaring operational costs have pushed many CBOs to their limits. This bill represents a crucial step towards addressing these pressing issues and ensuring the continuity of vital services for our people.

By enhancing collaborations with CBOs, this measure will improve access to essential services such as benefits administration, keiki care programs, workforce training, and houselessness support. These services embody the spirit of aloha and mālama that defines our islands, promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

The uncertainty surrounding federal funding for social service programs makes this bill even more critical. We must take proactive steps to safeguard the stability of these essential services. This legislation serves as a necessary protection to ensure that our most vulnerable community members continue to receive the support they need, regardless of changes in federal budgets.

This bill directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unattended, could jeopardize the critical services our Hawai'i families rely on. It represents an investment not just in services, but in the future of our keiki, our kūpuna, and all those who call these islands home.

I humbly urge you to pass HB 244 HD1 and make a lasting investment in the resilience and well-being of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents. Your support will echo through generations.

Mahalo nui loa for your consideration and leadership.

Shawn Kana'iaupuni

Shawn Kana'iaupuni, President & CEO
Partners in Development Foundation

Serving Hawai'i's Families, Living Hawaiian Values



Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii
PO Box 75380
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

A private, non-profit organization

February 24, 2025

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii in strong support of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

The mission of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii is to increase independence, productivity and integration of persons with developmental disabilities. We serve over 100 adults with intellectual disabilities through day care, transportation and residential services.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare.

This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes. The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on.

We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents. Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Marsh, MA, CFRE
President & CEO



Samaritan Counseling Center Hawaii

February 24, 2025

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From: Rachelle Chang
Executive Director
Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides professional, accessible mental health counseling to people with limited resources. We are a safety net for individuals and families who are uninsured or underinsured; who are unable to afford high co-pays and deductibles; or who have health insurance coverage which pays at below market-rates, making it difficult for them to find a counselor.

Through our Client Assistance Fund, we ensure that the people of Hawai'i can receive the mental health care they need to be healthy and whole – and support access to mental health care, especially in rural and underserved communities.

In 2024, Samaritan Counseling Center Hawai'i provided 3,556 mental health counseling sessions, and 2,374 sessions (67%) were subsidized in some way. Sometimes clients were not even aware that they were beneficiaries of the Client Assistance Fund!

Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services such as mental health care — rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawai'i's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, homelessness services, and mental health care, while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Celebrating 35 Years of Service

1020 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96814 • Phone: (808) 545-2740 • Fax: (808) 545-2852
www.samaritancounselingcenterhawaii.org • Email: info@samaritanhawaii.org

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawai'i must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, healthcare, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on.

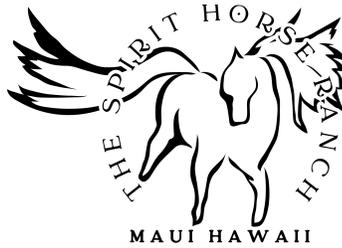
We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

With aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachelle Chang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachelle Chang
Executive Director



Paige Deponete
Director, Spirit Horse Ranch
1/16/2025

Subject: Support for [HB244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services](#)

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

At Spirit Horse Ranch, on the island of Maui we are a community based organization we witness daily the profound need for accessible, trauma-informed care in our community, especially for those affected by crises like the Maui wildfires and ongoing mental health challenges the island faces. I am writing in wholehearted support of HB , a244 HD1 vital measure to secure funding for the Department of Human Services collaboration with Community-Based Organizations.

This legislation is more than a financial step—it is a lifeline for Hawaii’s rural and underserved populations. Community-Based Organizations like ours truly bridge the gap between institutional services and the heart of our community, offering accessible pathways to mental health support, substance abuse recovery, and developmental care. However, stagnant funding threatens the sustainability of these services, endangering the very residents we are committed to helping.

At Spirit Horse Ranch, we provide equine-assisted services to help individuals heal from trauma, build resilience, and regain hope. Our programs, ranging from youth development to first responder wellness, rely heavily on the support of state and local partnerships. Without reliable funding, the future of our services—and the thousands of lives we touch—hangs in the balance.

The unpredictable nature of federal funding further complicates our ability to plan and deliver essential services. [HB244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services](#) offers a dependable solution to ensure continuity of care, giving organizations like ours the stability to meet the increasing demand for trauma recovery and mental health support.

By investing in CBOs, you are investing in the well-being of Hawaii’s residents, creating a ripple effect of healing and health that benefits us all. We strongly urge you to pass [HB244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services](#) to safeguard and expand these critical services for our community.

Mahalo for your leadership and dedication to the people of Hawaii.

P.O. Box 208 Kula Hi 96790 Ph 808-280-7070 ~ Info@thespirithorseranch.org

The Spirit Horse Ranch, Inc. is a HI Nonprofit corporation recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Federal Tax ID: 86-3879237)

With gratitude,
Paige Deponite
Director, Spirit Horse Ranch

P.O. Box 208 Kula Hi 96790 Ph 808-280-7070 ~ Info@thespirithorseranch.org

The Spirit Horse Ranch, Inc. is a HI Nonprofit corporation recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Federal Tax ID: 86-3879237)



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 24, 2025

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Greg Waibel, CEO of the YMCA of Honolulu. We are one of the largest nonprofits in Hawaii and provide services to the Department of Human Services. I am in **strong support** of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed our organizations to the brink.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Greg Waibel
President & CEO



To: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance

From: Paula Arcena, External Affairs Vice President
Mike Nguyen, Public Policy Manager
Sarielyn Curtis, External Affairs Specialist

Hearing: Monday, February 24, 2025, 12:00 pm, Conference Room 308

RE: **HB244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services**

AlohaCare appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of HB244 HD1**. This measure appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the State.

Founded in 1994 by Hawai'i's community health centers, AlohaCare is a community-rooted, non-profit health plan serving over 70,000 Medicaid and dual-eligible health plan members on all islands. Approximately 37 percent of our members are keiki. We are Hawai'i's only health plan exclusively dedicated to serving Medicaid and Medicaid-Medicare dually-eligible beneficiaries. Our mission is to serve individuals and communities in the true spirit of aloha by ensuring and advocating for access to quality, whole-person care for all.

AlohaCare's commitment to whole-person care and health equity includes addressing the various social determinants of health. We work closely with Hawai'i's safety net of non-profit community-based organizations (CBOs) dedicated to supporting individuals and families facing social risks, such as homelessness, domestic violence, and food insecurity among other challenges.

As a safety-net health plan, AlohaCare is very appreciative of the critical services our fellow safety-net CBOs provide for the health and well-being of our community. The financial viability and sustainability of our safety-net partners is imperative to AlohaCare and is why we joined the True Cost Coalition. This measure is in line with the True Cost Coalition's goal which is to ensure government contracts adequately reimburse community-based non-profit providers of essential social services that have created a crucial safety-net for our community.

Many of our CBO partners rely on federal, state, and local grants to attempt to fill the current funding gap created by stagnant state funding and rising operational costs.



AlohaCare has witnessed the urgent funding needs of its CBO partners through its *Imua Loa* community giving program, which recently grew into the AlohaCare Foundation, giving \$1 million to providers and CBOs annually in grants, sponsorships, and donations. Even with effective community giving sources such as the AlohaCare Foundation, Hawai'i's CBOs are unable to fill the funding gaps and are in desperate need of steady sources of long-term funding. State appropriations and collaboration with CBOs are especially significant with potential federal budget changes.

Without action, programs and services are at risk of being cut or eliminated, which will harm the most vulnerable in our community. We ask our state government leaders to ensure that funding is allocated to keep our communities healthy and safe. This measure will support CBOs and ensure that the critical services they provide aren't jeopardized.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify in **support** of **HB244 HD1**.



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

BILL HB244 HD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: Monday, 02-24-25 12:00PM in Conference Room 308

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way stands in strong support of HB244 HD1 to appropriate funds for the department of human services to collaborate with contracted community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the State.

Hawai`i families depend on a network of community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) that serve as a critical safety net. Unfortunately, this safety net is fraying due to insufficient government funding.

Aloha United Way is a member of the Hawai`i True Cost Coalition, which is comprised of over 70 CBOs serving more than 500,000 people statewide. The TCC advocates to address government funding shortfalls so CBOs can continue delivering vital services to the most vulnerable in our community.

AUW's recently released **State of ALICE in Hawaii report found that 40% of our state's residents are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, or ALICE**. These are local families and individuals who are employed but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet a basic survival budget. ALICE families make too much to qualify for public assistance, so they must increasingly rely on the services of our CBOs to make ends meet.

The current federal funding uncertainty only reinforces the urgency to address local funding shortfalls to protect Hawai`i's most vulnerable residents.

For the well-being of our residents and our state, **we urge you to pass HB244 HD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Bartell".

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way



PARTNERS
IN CARE

PARTNERS IN CARE
O'ahu Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

TO: House Committee on Finance

RE: **Strong Support HB 244 HD1** - Relating to the Department of Human Services

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference
Monday, February 24, 2025, 12:00PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee:

Partners in Care (PIC), O'ahu's Continuum of Care, **strongly supports HB 244 HD1**, which provides much-needed funding to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to enhance collaboration with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and sustain essential social services across the state.

As a coalition of homeless service providers working to end homelessness in Hawai'i, PIC recognizes the critical role that nonprofit organizations play in delivering essential services to individuals and families experiencing housing instability. CBOs are on the front lines of Hawai'i's homelessness crisis, providing emergency shelter, permanent supportive housing, outreach, case management, and other vital services that help individuals transition from homelessness to stability. However, funding for these organizations has not kept pace with growing needs, rising operational costs, and the added pressures of recent crises such as the Maui wildfires.

HB 244 HD1 directly addresses these challenges by ensuring that DHS can adequately fund and partner with CBOs to meet the needs of Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations. Strengthening this partnership will:

- Improve access to housing assistance, homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing programs;
- Enhance support services such as mental health counseling, substance use treatment, and employment assistance;
- Bolster Hawai'i's safety net to prevent at-risk individuals from falling into homelessness in the first place.

With federal funding for social services remaining uncertain, Hawai'i must take decisive action to ensure the long-term stability of programs that serve individuals experiencing homelessness. Without additional investment, many of these programs could be forced to cut services or shut down entirely, leaving thousands without the assistance they need to rebuild their lives.

Partners in Care urges the committee to pass HB 244 HD1 and secure the future of essential homelessness services in Hawai'i. This investment is not only a moral imperative but also a cost-effective solution that will lead to healthier, more stable communities statewide.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

PARTNERS IN CARE- O'ahu Continuum of Care

200 North Vineyard Boulevard • Suite A-210 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96817 • www.PartnersinCareOahu.org

91-1841 Fort Weaver Road
Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706
Phone 808.681.3500
Fax 808.681.5280
www.childandfamilyservice.org

Representative Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

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Council on Accreditation
Better Business Bureau

AFFILIATIONS
Kauai United Way
Maui United Way
Hawaii Island United Way

February 24, 2025; 12:00 p.m.; Agenda #2
Conference room 308 & Videoconference

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1 - Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Child and Family Service (CFS) to express our **strong support** of HB 244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Through the utilization of our core H.O.P.E. values (Humility, Ownership, Perseverance, and Engagement), our programs aim to help Hawaii's most vulnerable populations to strengthen families and foster the healthy development of children. We work directly with individuals and families to break cycles of violence and foster environments where children and families can thrive. Children, individuals experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic violence, and many other groups rely on the safety nets provided by CFS and other CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed CBOs to the brink.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Child & Family Service supports HB 244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that may jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on.

This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's communities continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes. It will preserve essential services and investment in the safety, health and future of Hawaii's communities. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

We respectfully urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable populations ensuring they receive the protection and assistance they deserve.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Amanda Pump
President & CEO
Child & Family Service



Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is a nonpartisan 501c4 nonprofit committed to advocating for children and their families. Our core issues are safety, health, and education.

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: HB 244 HD 1 Relating to the Department of Human Services

Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference
Monday, February 24, 2025, 12:00PM

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of HCANSpeaks!, I am writing in strong support of HB 244, relating to department of human services. This bill appropriates funds for the department of human services to collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs) to address the need for social services in the State.

Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink.

This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawai'i's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, childcare, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawai'i must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, employment support, and child welfare. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB 244 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **strong support of HB 244.**

Kind regards,
Noreen Kohl, Ph.D.

Policy Researcher and Advocate

Hawai'i Children's Action Network, a member of the Hawai'i [True Cost Coalition](#)



February 24, 2025

Members of the House Committee on Finance:

Chair Kyle T. Yamashita

Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi

Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti

Rep. Daniel Holt

Rep. Ikaika Hussey

Rep. Sue L. Keohokapu-Loy

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa

Rep. Matthias Kusch

Rep. Rachele F. Lamosao

Rep. Mike Lee

Rep. Tyson K. Miyake

Rep. Dee Morikawa

Rep. Shirley Ann Templo

Rep. David Alcos III

Rep. Julie Reyes Oda

Rep. Gene Ward

Re: HB244 HD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (HSCADV) addresses the social, political, and economic impacts of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities. We are a statewide partnership of domestic violence programs and shelters.

On behalf of HSCADV and our 25 member programs statewide, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support of HB244 HD1**, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Most of our member programs receive funding from DHS directly through the state or from the federal government in pass-thru grants. For example, at least half of the \$3 million in DHS budget for domestic violence services consists of federal funds. Over one million comes directly from the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Family Violence Prevention Services. These funds are being scrutinized by the current Presidential administration.¹

The services funded include:

- **Emergency domestic violence shelters**
- **Domestic violence services for families engaged in the child welfare system**
- **Domestic violence-related legal services**

¹ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25506813-govdoc20250128-263582/#document/p16>

- **Teen domestic violence prevention**

For years, our programs have barely been making do with their current funding. Contracted amounts have not changed in a decade, and organizations are expected to do more with less. Now, with potential changes in federal funding, lives are at stake. The federal funding freeze will impact life-saving services and endanger survivors' lives and those of their children.

Shelters that provide homes for those fleeing violence will have to consider drastically reducing their services or even closing their doors which could lead to increased homelessness in a state that is already grappling with an overwhelming homeless population. No less than four thousand lives will be impacted, and much more when we consider those who serve survivors and their children.

This is an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical life-saving services Hawai'i families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Sincerely,
Angelina Mercado, Executive Director

HB-244-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:51:39 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angie Knight	The Institute for Human Services	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

IHS, The Institute for Human Services supports the passing of this critical measure.



Lisa Darcy, Founder
Share Your Mana, Maui County
February 24, 2025

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1, which aims to increase funding for the Department of Human Services to enhance its partnership with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

Hawaii's most vulnerable populations—children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those in need of social services—rely heavily on the safety net provided by CBOs. However, stagnant funding levels and rising operational costs, especially following crises like the Maui wildfires, have pushed these organizations to the brink.

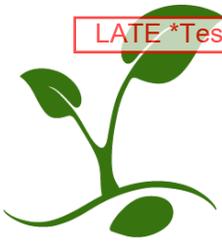
This bill is a necessary step toward addressing Hawaii's growing social service needs. By strengthening collaborations with CBOs, we can improve access to benefits, child care, workforce training, and homelessness services while promoting stability and well-being in our communities.

Given the ongoing uncertainty of federal spending on social service programs, Hawaii must take decisive action to ensure the stability of critical services provided through the Department of Human Services. Federal resources often fluctuate, and reductions in funding could disproportionately impact programs supporting homelessness, child welfare, and mental health. This bill is a necessary safeguard to guarantee that Hawaii's most vulnerable populations continue receiving the assistance they need, regardless of federal budget changes.

The True Cost Coalition supports HB244 HD1 because it directly addresses an urgent funding gap that, if left unchecked, would jeopardize the critical services Hawaii families depend on. We urge you to pass this measure and invest in the future of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

Sincerely,
Lisa Darcy
Founder, Share Your Mana



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 244 HD1 - Relating to the Department of Human Services

House Committee on Finance

Monday, February 24, 2025 at 12:00PM Conf. Rm. 308 and via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB 244 HD1**, which provides essential funding to the Department of Human Services (DHS) to strengthen collaboration with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and maintain critical social services throughout our state.

As a research and advocacy organization focused on economic justice, affordable housing, and food security, Hawai'i Appleseed understands that robust social services form the foundation of economic stability for vulnerable families. Our work has consistently shown that when effective social service programs meet basic needs, individuals and families can build pathways to economic self-sufficiency and increased community contribution.

Nonprofit organizations play a critical role in delivering these essential services to individuals and families experiencing economic instability. However, funding for these organizations has not kept pace with growing needs and rising operational costs. HB 244 HD1 directly addresses these challenges by ensuring that DHS can adequately fund and partner with CBOs to meet the needs of Hawai'i's most vulnerable populations. Strengthening this partnership will:

- Improve access to housing assistance, homelessness prevention, and rapid rehousing programs that keep people housed, reducing the long-term economic costs of homelessness for both families and our state. This will bolster Hawai'i's safety net to prevent at-risk individuals from falling into homelessness in the first place.
- Strengthen social services such as vocational rehabilitation, self sufficiency programs, child care support, and health care payment assistance, creating safety nets that prevent economic shocks from pushing families into poverty, particularly important in Hawai'i's high-cost economy.
- Support essential food assistance programs that ensure keiki and kūpuna don't go hungry while families work to achieve financial stability.

The economic challenges facing Hawai'i families have intensified following the COVID-19 pandemic and Maui wildfires. With federal funding for social services remaining uncertain, Hawai'i must take action to ensure the long-term stability of programs that serve vulnerable households. Without additional investment, many of these programs could be forced to cut services or shut down entirely, leaving thousands without the assistance they need and dismantling the very infrastructure that supports economic stability for thousands of Hawai'i residents.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 244 HD1 - Relating to the Department of Human Services

House Committee on Finance

Monday, February 24, 2025 at 12:00PM Conf. Rm. 308 and via Videoconference

Our research reports consistently indicate that investments in preventive social services generate significant savings in emergency response costs for the state.¹ This makes HB 244 HD1 both fiscally responsible governance and also aligned with the state's commitment to supporting all communities.

Hawaii Appleseed urges the committee to pass HB 244 HD1 and secure the future of vital services that promote economic justice and opportunity for all of Hawai'i's people.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹ <https://hiappleseed.org/publications>



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair

BILL HB244 HD1
POSITION: SUPPORT

Hearing Date: Monday, 02-24-25 12:00PM in Conference Room 308

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

Aloha United Way stands in strong support of HB244 HD1 to appropriate funds for the department of human services to collaborate with contracted community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the State.

Hawai`i families depend on a network of community-based nonprofit organizations (CBOs) that serve as a critical safety net. Unfortunately, this safety net is fraying due to insufficient government funding.

Aloha United Way is a member of the Hawai`i True Cost Coalition, which is comprised of over 70 CBOs serving more than 500,000 people statewide. The TCC advocates to address government funding shortfalls so CBOs can continue delivering vital services to the most vulnerable in our community.

AUW's recently released **State of ALICE in Hawaii report found that 40% of our state's residents are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, or ALICE**. These are local families and individuals who are employed but whose incomes are not sufficient to meet a basic survival budget. ALICE families make too much to qualify for public assistance, so they must increasingly rely on the services of our CBOs to make ends meet.

The current federal funding uncertainty only reinforces the urgency to address local funding shortfalls to protect Hawai`i's most vulnerable residents.

For the well-being of our residents and our state, **we urge you to pass HB244 HD1**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Bartell".

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

HB-244-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:31:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Brown	U.S.VETS	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB244 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Tanya Brown**, and I serve as the **Executive Director of U.S.VETS Wai‘anae**, where we provide housing, employment services, and critical support to both veterans and non-veterans experiencing homelessness. We serve over 1500 annually with over 700 being keiki. I strongly support **HB244 HD1**, as this funding is essential to keeping our programs running and ensuring those in need have access to stable housing and essential services.

Without this funding, not only would hundreds of individuals and families face greater instability, but the impacts would extend to the entire community—including you. Increased homelessness strains emergency services, healthcare systems, and public safety resources, all of which affect every resident in Hawai‘i. The loss of shelter beds, case management, and job placement programs would push more people onto the streets, deepening the crisis *we all share responsibility in addressing*.

I urge you to pass **HB244 HD1** to protect and uplift our most vulnerable community members and prevent the broader consequences that would impact us all. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Tanya Brown

Executive Director, U.S.VETS Wai‘anae

Karen Worthington, Kula, HI 96790

February 21, 2025

To: Chair Kyle T. Yamashita and Vice Chair Jenna Takenouchi
House Committee on Finance

From: Karen Worthington, Private Citizen

Re: **HB 244 HD1**: Relating to the Department of Human Services
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 308 and Videoconference, February 24, 2025, 12:00pm

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Representative Yamashita, Representative Takenouchi, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 244 HD1**, which appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations (CBOs) to address critical social service needs in our state. This legislation represents an important step toward strengthening Hawaii's social safety net and ensuring sustainable support for our most vulnerable populations.

My name is Karen Worthington, and I am a children's law and policy attorney with a consulting business on Maui, Karen Worthington Consulting. I have worked as a lawyer in and around state systems affecting children and families throughout my 30-year career and I have worked extensively with Hawai'i state departments and nonprofit organizations that support children and families who exist at the margins of our society.

Please pass HB 244 HD1. A 2022 survey of Hawaii Community-Based Organizations revealed that 91% reported government contracts do not cover full operating costs, with 79% having to cut administrative costs to maintain services. This situation is unsustainable and threatens the stability of our social service infrastructure.

CBOs are essential partners in delivering critical services on behalf of the Department of Human Services. They provide vital support for child welfare services, homelessness prevention, workforce development, and family strengthening programs. However, stagnant funding levels combined with rising operational costs have created an increasingly precarious situation for these organizations.

The uncertainty surrounding federal funding for social services makes this legislation particularly timely. By ensuring adequate state support for CBOs, we can maintain crucial services regardless of federal budget fluctuations. This proactive approach will help protect Hawaii's most vulnerable residents from potential disruptions in federal funding streams. If you would like additional information related to my testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me at karen@karenworthington.com.

Best regards,



Karen Worthington

HB-244-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:06:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Eaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carolyn Eaton. I am a resident of Makiki and I strongly support this bill for funding community-based services for individuals the State releases from incarceration.

Mahalo for consideration of my strong support.

HB-244-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 10:08:14 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Arial Tochiki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I am writing in support of HB 244. I am recently retired Executive Director and Founder of EPIC `Ohana and Co-chair of the Malama Ohana Working Group. Community Based Organizations provide essential services to families and children throughout the Department of Human Services. Our contracts have been underfunded, yet we continue to provide services by supplementing state funds with private funds, by stretching our staff thin. We are not able to pay competitive salaries. Community Based Organizations ARE the safety net.

HB-244-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 11:59:33 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Veronica Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill, I appreciate those who introduced it, I appreciate the opportunity to present testimony regarding it, and am hopeful that it passes to ensure those in need of these services obtain them. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore