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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

April 1, 2025

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 244 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.**

Hearing: April 3, 2025, 10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & 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 12/31/2050. (SD1)

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 suggested appropriation amounts and program IDs in its committee report.

The Committee on Health and Human Services further amended the measure by:

- (1) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion;
and
- (2) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

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 fewer 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.



HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

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

Vonnell Ramos, President
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer
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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

April 1, 2025

To: Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
And members of the Committee on Ways and Means

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports HB 244 HD1 SD1 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



April 1, 2025

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Senators Henry J.C. Aquino, Lynn DeCoite, Brandon J.C. Elefante, Troy N. Hashimoto, Lorraine R. Inouye, Dru Mamo Kanuha, Michelle N. Kidani, Donna Mercado Kim, Chris Lee, Glenn Wakai, and Kurt Fevella, Committee Members

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

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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/>

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ON PRISONS

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Today's Inmate; Tomorrow's Neighbor



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Thursday, April 3, 2025

Room 211 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

10:01 AM

STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB 244 HD1, SD1 - DHS FUNDING FOR CBOs

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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 3,767 Hawai'i individuals living behind bars¹ and under the "care and custody" of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation as of March 24, 2025. We are always mindful that 936 persons - 49.5% - of Hawai'i's male prison population (1,890) 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to share our strong support for HB 244 HD1 that appropriates funds for DHS to collaborate with contracted community-based organizations to address the need for social services in Hawai'i.

As a proud member of the True Cost Coalition, Community Alliance on Prisons appreciates this opportunity to **strongly support HB 244 HD1, SD1** 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.

Community Alliance on Prisons advocates for justice-involved individuals who are exiting incarceration and need a whole host of services including, but not

¹ DCR Weekly Population Report, March 24, 2025

<https://dcr.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Pop-Reports-Weekly-2025-03-24.pdf>

limited to housing, food, healthcare, childcare, self-sufficiency, healthcare in order to transition from incarceration back to community life.

Hawai`i community-based organizations have nobly filled the pukas in service delivery and for that, we are eternally grateful. These amazing community organizations are doing the work of the government

We are all deeply concerned about our vulnerable neighbors and communities impacted by incarceration in light of the recent actions taken by the new federal administration.

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 for full-time service sector employment.

We implore the committee to fund these organizations so they can continue providing desperately needed services to keep families together, to help those who cannot help themselves, and to mend Hawai`i's torn and tattered safety net.

Mahalo nui for hearing this important bill that has widespread support of Hawai`i's people who understand the values of aloha, malama, kuleana, and kokua.

WE ARE HAWAI`I. WE CARE FOR AND ABOUT EACH OTHER.



**Parents And
Children Together**

**BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST**

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, & Members,
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs
DATE: April 3, 2025 10:01 AM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) strongly supports HB 244 HD1 SD1, 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 tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



HB244 HD1 SD1 DHS Funds for Social Services

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Thursday, Apr 3, 2025: 10:01: Room 211 Videoconference

Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition Supports HB244 SD1 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.



HAWAI'I HEALTH &
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*"Reducing harm,
promoting health,
creating wellness, and
fighting stigma
in Hawai'i and
the Pacific."*

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 244, HD 1, SD 1

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, & WAM Committee

FROM: Nikos Leverenz, Policy & Advancement Manager

DATE: April 3, 2025 (10:01 AM)

Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) **strongly supports** HB 244, HD 1, SD 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.

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

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Kauai United Way
Maui United Way
Hawaii Island United Way

Thursday, April 3, 2025; 10:01 a.m.
Conference room 211 & Videoconference

Subject: Support for HB 244 HD1 SD1 - Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki 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 SD1, 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 SD1 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



April 3, 2025

RE: Support for HB 244, HD1, SD1 Relating to the Department of Human Services

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

On behalf of Hawai'i Foodbank, I express our support for HB 244, HD1, SD1 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.

For over 40 years, Hawai'i Foodbank has provided daily and emergency assistance to those facing food insecurity in Hawai'i. As the state's leading hunger-relief organization, Hawai'i Foodbank distributes food to families and individuals on O'ahu and in Kaua'i County through direct service programs and through our network of 266 agency partners and pantries. Last year, we served an average of over 150,000 people each month, distributing a total of 21 million pounds of nutritious food, including 5.9 million pounds of fresh produce. Hawai'i Foodbank is also contracted as a SNAP outreach provider through the State.

Based on our experience and now serving over 170,000 people each month – nearly as much as during the peak of COVID – we know firsthand how important it is that we continue to address the needs in our community.

We urge you to consider this important measure, which will help community-based organizations continue to provide critical services and care for all of Hawai'i's families.

With aloha,

Amy Miller
President and CEO, Hawai'i Foodbank

Date: April 2, 2025

To: COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Committee

From: Micah A. Kāne, Chief Executive Officer & President

RE: Testimony in Support for HB 244 HD 1 SD 1, Relating to the Department of Human Services
Date: Thursday, April 3, 10:01 am
Place: Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

The Hawai'i Community Foundation (HCF) supports HB 244 HD 1 SD 1, which increases funding for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to contract with organizations that provide vital services to the community. Human services are a priority under HCF's CHANGE Framework within the Community Centered Economy and Health and Wellness sectors. Philanthropy does not have sufficient resources to address the funding gap that nonprofit organizations face when delivering critical human services.

HB 244 HD 1 SD 1 is crucial for ensuring that our most vulnerable populations, including individuals experiencing homelessness, children, and those in need of mental health and social services, receive the care they need. HCF grantee partners across the CHANGE framework see firsthand the tremendous challenges faced by those who rely on social services across our island communities. Their work often requires partnering with DHS to deliver essential services.

The current funding levels for these services have not kept pace with the growing demand or the rising operational costs, including increases in insurance premiums. Given the uncertainty around federal funding, service providers are likely to see even greater budget shortfalls. The consequences of not funding the true costs of these services will be direct and immediate. Services will be cut, and jobs will be lost. HCF believes that increased funding will sustain services and extend DHS' reach and impact across our communities.

HCF supports HB 244 HD 1 SD 1 and encourages its passage.



HIPHI Board

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Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: April 2, 2025

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

RE: Support for HB 244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Hrg: Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 10:01 AM, Conference Room 211

Hawai'i Public Health Institute,¹ **supports HB 244 HD1 SD1**, relating to the Department of Human Services, which 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.

Nonprofit organizations deliver critical services to our community. Investing in nonprofits provides financial support for organizations that uplift public health, care for our environment, improve learning outcomes for our keiki, and preserve the cultural heritage of our island home.

Funding Disparities

Local nonprofits "serve over 500,000 residents statewide by providing a diverse range of essential services—from food security and housing assistance to domestic violence support and care for seniors."²

Yet, in recent years, increases in funding for nonprofits have not been enough to offset the cost of services. As operational expenses for nonprofits have risen, governments have reduced public support for nonprofits as a percentage of their overall budgets, a trend that has been ongoing since the 1980s.

Building Community Resilience

A 2022 survey conducted by the True Cost Coalition found that 40% of all organizations surveyed felt they may not be able to continue to operate in Hawai'i if government funding challenges are not addressed.³ The survey further found that 86% of nonprofits believe the funding gap between government contracts and the cost of providing services will increase in the coming years

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² "Hawaii's Quiet Crisis: Nonprofits Sound Alarm on Underfunding Peril" - Institute for Human Services. <https://ihshawaii.org/true-cost>

³ <https://hitruccost.com/resources/2022-survey-results>



and 91% had government contract budgets that fell below the full operating costs required to provide contracted services, forcing 79% of those surveyed to cut administrative costs and 56% to undercut staff salaries.

Long-Term Return on Investment

Investing in nonprofits that provide social services delivers a strong return on investment—not just for those directly benefiting, but for society as a whole. Research on mental health, housing, food accessibility, and public health consistently shows that these programs yield significant economic gains by improving overall well-being, productivity, and stability. In many cases, the returns exceed 5:1.^{4,5,6,7}

These significant benefits present a clear and valuable opportunity to strengthen our society. However, failing to address these needs—or worse, cutting funding for existing services—would not only erase the progress we've made but also lead to far greater costs for our state in the long run.

By providing financial security to nonprofits in our state, the legislature can ensure hungry families have access to nutritious food, survivors of intimate partner violence are afforded legal protection, homeless families are able to obtain stable shelter, low-income kūpuna receive quality medical care, and the public health of our communities is preserved for generations to come. Taking a proactive approach to societal challenges ensures that we are building a foundation for lasting success, both for our people and our communities, now and into the future.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nate Hix'.

Nate Hix
Director of Policy and Advocacy

⁴Stelmach R, Kocher EL, Kataria I, Jackson-Morris AM, Saxena S, Nugent R. The global return on investment from preventing and treating adolescent mental disorders and suicide: a modelling study. *BMJ Glob Health*. 2022 Jun <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9240828/>

⁵Jacob V, Chattopadhyay SK, Attipoe-Dorcoo S, Peng Y, Hahn RA, Finnie R, Cobb J, Cuellar AE, Emmons KM, Remington PL. Permanent Supportive Housing With Housing First: Findings From a Community Guide Systematic Economic Review. *Am J Prev Med*. 2022 Mar. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8863642/>

⁶“True Cost of Food: School Meals Case Study”. Rockefeller Foundation. <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/reports/true-cost-of-food-school-meals-case-study/>

⁷Masters R, Anwar E, Collins B, et al. Return on investment of public health interventions: a systematic review *J Epidemiol Community Health* 2017; <https://jech.bmj.com/content/71/8/827>



Date: Thursday, April 3, 2025

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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 HAWAI'I

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Date: April 3, 2025

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1** 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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



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

Amanda Pump
President & CEO
Child & Family Service
April 3, 2025

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Maui United Way
Hawaii Island United Way

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Child and Family Service to show our **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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



Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 SD1 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



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

Letter of Support

April 3, 2025

RE: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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
Hawai'i Health & Harm Reduction Center

HAWAII HEALTH
& HARM REDUCTION
CENTER
677 Ala Moana Blvd.
Suite 226
Honolulu, HI 96813
(808) 521-2437
www.hhhrc.org

Katy Chen
President/CEO
Goodwill Hawaii
4/3/2025

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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



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

TO: Chair Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Moriwaki

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

DATE: April 3, 2025

POSITION: IHS supports HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

IHS, The Institute for Human Services, **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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.

April 3, 2025

From: Rona Yagi Fukumoto
President & CEO
Lanakila Pacific

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Lanakila Pacific, I am writing in strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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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THE MEDIATION CENTER OF THE PACIFIC, INC.
Bringing People Together to Talk, Negotiate and Resolve Conflict Creatively

1301 Young Street, Honolulu, HI 96814 Tel: 521-6767 Fax: 538-1454 Email: mcp@mediatehawaii.org

April 3, 2025

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

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Mediation Center of the Pacific (MCP), I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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

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PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION

April 3, 2025

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

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

As President and CEO of Partners in Development Foundation (PIDF), I write expressing strong support for HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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



Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc.

P.O. Box 2122
Kahului, HI 96733
808-249-2990
Fax: 808-249-2991
www.meoinc.org

April 3, 2025

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

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Maui Economic Opportunity (MEO), Inc. I am writing in strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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



Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii
PO Box 75380
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

A private, non-profit organization

April 3, 2025

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Responsive Caregivers of Hawaii in strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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

April 3, 2025

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

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 SD1 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



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

April 3, 2025

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 HB244 HD1 SD1 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



Lisa Darcy, Founder
Share Your Mana, Maui County
April 3, 2025

Subject: Support for HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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 SD1 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

Hawai'i True Cost Coalition

Date: April 3, 2025

Re: Strong Support of HB244 HD1 SD1, Relating to the Department of Human Services

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

Our coalition of organizations for Hawai'i True Cost Coalition are writing in strong support of HB244 HD1 SD1, 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.

HB244 HD1 SD1 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

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HB-244-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 1:41:30 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen L Worthington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Dela Cruz, Senator Moriwaki, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HB 244 HD1 SD1**, 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 SD1 with an effective date of July 1, 2025. 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

Karen Worthington

HB-244-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 3:35:43 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Carolyn Eaton and I am a resident of Honolulu. I wish to register the very strongest support for full funding of this measure. Those men and women reentering our communities after serving time in State custody need a variety of critical services during transition from life "inside."

Hawai'i community-based organizations have recognized the vulnerability of these folks and for many years have supported them with housing, food, healthcare and other services, providing the safety net the State of Hawai'i, should fully fund if it aspires to adhere to the values of its native culture. Upon their re-entries to our communities, these members of our families and communities deserve our help.

Mahalo for your hard work during the busy Legislative session. Bring your heart to support this bill.

HB-244-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/1/2025 4:55:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Venus K Rosete-Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Pleawe support this bill in oder to dotinue to support the many community--based organizations in doing th their necessary with with child, youth and families..

Mahalo,

Venus

LATE

HB-244-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 12:49:16 PM
Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carla Allison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB 244 HD1, SD1.

Increasing contracts for community-based organizations is the best investment we can make in our future. It has been 20 years since contracts were last increased, so it should be no surprise that service providers are challenged to continue serving our community. When wages remain low, staff retention challenges become hard to overcome. Let's provide funding at levels representing the true cost of the services to ensure these services continue. Well-funded service providers generate more members of our community receiving the critical care they need.

Please support HB 244 HD1, SD1.

Thank you,

Carla Allison - Honolulu

LATE

HB-244-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/2/2025 3:03:55 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/3/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaylin Helepololei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

Aloha, my name is Kaylin Helepololei. I am a current social work student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and I strongly support HB244 HD1 SD1, which will appropriate funds for the Department of Human Services to collaborate with community-based organizations to address the need for social services in the state. Community-based services are vital for so many individuals and families, many of whom only have access to these services through these organizations. During my time working in a substance use treatment clinic, I was able to see the positive impact it made for those without any insurance who did not have to choose between receiving treatment and their livelihood. Community-based services are beneficial and should be prioritized and supported.

Mahalo,

Kaylin Helepololei--PearlCity, HI