



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, M.D.
ADMINISTRATOR

LATE

March 11, 2025

To: SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Henry JC Aquino, Vice Chair

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair, and
Honorable Members

From: Jack Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and
Sr. Advisor to Governor Josh Green MD on Healthcare Innovation

Re. HB703, HD1 – Relating to Kupuna Housing

Hearing: Wednesday, March 12, 2025 @ 1:05 pm; Conference Room 225

Position: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HD1, which temporarily extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 30, 2028. The program provides support to qualified older adults, who are homeless, or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Creative, long-term, affordable housing strategies are needed to prevent individuals and families, who are struggling financially and are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The healthcare costs implications of failing to support this measure could be enormous and far greater than the rent subsidies attached. Keep in mind that a single annual nursing home placement is now approaching \$250,000.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB703 HD1
Relating to Kupuna Housing

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
SENATOR JOY SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, VICE CHAIR

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
SENATOR STANLEY CHANG, CHAIR
SENATOR TROY N. HASHIMOTO, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 1:05 P.M., Conference Room 225

EOA's Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health, **supports HB703 HD1.**

Fiscal Implications: This measure does not include an appropriation.

Purpose and Justification: The purpose of this bill is to temporarily extend the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 30, 2028. The program provides support to qualified older adults, who are homeless, or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Creative, long-term, affordable housing strategies are needed to prevent individuals and families, who are struggling financially and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data the poverty rate amongst Americans age sixty-five and older has increased from 8.9% in 2020 to 10.3% in 2021. As housing costs and inflation rise, kūpuna who rely on retirement income from Social Security and/or are on fixed incomes, are

struggling to pay for basic necessities. As a result, kūpuna are forced to cut back on essential expenses, such as food, transportation, and medication just to stretch their finite funds. Any setback in their income can affect their ability to pay their mortgage or rent and put them at risk of becoming homeless.

The State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna creates a pathway out of homelessness by reducing the financial burden from Hawaii's high rental costs. Stable housing leads to better physical and mental health and reduces the strain on emergency shelters. Extending this critical program ensures kūpuna have access to safe and affordable housing.

Recommendation: The EOA supports this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

25:OED

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
1:05 PM – Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
HB 703, HD1
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Honorable Chair Chang, Chair San Buenaventura, and members of the Senate Committee on Housing, and Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of House Bill (HB) 703, HD1, which seeks to extend the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program (RSP) for Kupuna to 6/30/2028.

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

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

The HPHA would truly appreciate the opportunity to extend State RSP for Kupuna to serve more of our community's at-risk kupuna. This program is crucial because it provides Kupuna with access to safe, affordable housing, which significantly impacts their overall health, wellbeing, and quality of life by reducing financial stress, ultimately leading to better mental and physical health outcomes and a sense of stability in their later years.



Shortly after the passage of Act 98, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, the HPHA contracted with Catholic Charities Hawaii to administer the State RSP for Kupuna and currently have 76 Kupuna households enrolled in the program with an average rent supplement amount of \$414 per Kupuna household.

The HPHA stands ready and looks forward to assisting the Legislature in this endeavor and looks at this measure as an opportunity to be part of the overall solution needed to address all housing related issues in Hawaii.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Committees with its testimony. We thank you very much for your dedicated and continued support.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 703 HD1
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Senate Committee on Housing
Hawai'i State Capitol

March 12th, 2025

1:05 p.m.

Room 225

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura and Chang, Vice Chair Aquino and Hashimoto, and
Members of the Senate Committees:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony **SUPPORT** of HB703 HD1, which extends the State Rent Supplement Program for kupuna until June 30, 2028.

The extension of the kupuna housing program is a vital lifeline for Hawai'i's kupuna. The program qualifies individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless for supplemental rent assistance. In 2022, the United Way put the monthly "survival budget" for one adult aged 65 years or older in Hawai'i at \$2,021; significantly more than the average Social Security payment of \$1,657.¹ Kupuna who can't work and are paying rent on a fixed income thus face a significant risk of homelessness. Even among the 61,000 people 65 and over working to afford life in the islands,² housing insecurity is one adverse life event away.

Affordable housing is one of the most pressing problems in Hawaii. Affordable housing solutions require a robust, comprehensive, multiprong approach. This bill addresses a component of the affordable housing crisis by ensuring that low-income kupuna are not forced into homelessness through a combination of fixed incomes and rapidly rising rents.

OHA urges the Committee to pass HB703 HD1. Taking care of kupuna is a core value for Native Hawaiians and the larger community here in Hawai'i. This bill reflects our collective commitment to taking care of our most vulnerable populations and ensuring basic dignity for Hawai'i's residents. Mahalo nui loa for considering this testimony.

¹ An update on financial hardship in Hawai'i. (n.d.-a)., p.7
<https://www.unitedforalice.org/Attachments/AllReports/2024-ALICE-Update-HI-FINAL-v2.pdf>

² *Id.*

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brillhante Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director



Kehaulani M. Costa
Housing Administrator

Keiko M. Mercado
Assistant Housing Administrator

County of Hawai'i
Office of Housing and Community Development

1990 Kino'ole Street, Suite 102 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8379 • Fax (808) 961-8685
Existing Housing: (808) 959-4642 • Fax (808) 959-9308
Kona: (808) 323-4300 • Fax (808) 323-4301

March 11, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 703, HD1
A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair

Sen. Henry J.C. Aquino, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Sen. Stanley Chang, Chair

Sen. Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 1:05 PM

Place of Hearing: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Aloha Honorable Chairs San Buenaventura, Aquino, Chang and Hashimoto, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services and Committee on Housing,

On behalf of the County of Hawai'i Office of Housing and Community Development (OHCD), I am pleased to provide testimony in **support of House Bill 703, HD1**, which extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 30, 2028.

Hawai'i's aging population faces significant challenges in securing affordable housing, especially as rental costs continue to rise. Many of our kupuna live on fixed incomes, such as Social Security, and are increasingly at risk of becoming unstably housed or homeless. Without stable housing, our kupuna are more likely to experience worsened physical and mental health, leading to greater reliance on services.

Extending the sunset date of this program ensures that seniors will continue to receive the assistance they need, allowing them to remain in stable, affordable housing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB 703, HD1.

Mahalo,

Handwritten signature of Kehaulani M. Costa.

Kehaulani M. Costa
Housing Administrator



HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:55:11 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/12/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angie Knight	Testifying for The Institute for Human Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

**HB703 HD1, SB878 related to the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna
In consideration of Extending the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for
Kupuna to 6/30/2028.**

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Senator Henry J.C. Aquino , Senator Stanley Chang, Senator
Troy N. Hashimoto, others

From: Sara Lenzer Medeiros,
PABEA Member, Hawaii Island

March 10, 2025

I am Sara Lenzer Medeiros, member of the Policy Advisory Board for Elder Affairs (PABEA), which is an appointed board tasked with advising the Executive Office on Aging (EOA). My testimony does not represent the views of the EOA but of PABEA.

PABEA offers it's full support of HB703/SB878 as they relate to the State Supplement Program for Kupuna housing.

Where there are many competing issues needing Legislative attention and funding, dwindling housing and shelter options for Hawaii's older residents is more critical than ever. The risk to our kupuna is real and the number of seniors becoming homeless or at risk for homelessness is rising. According to the AUW 2024 ALICE Report, the lack of affordable housing disproportionately affects seniors. Many low income seniors are at higher risk without help. The Kupuna Housing grants program has been very successful and should be continued.

The possible elimination of federal rental assistance programs, such as those offered by HUD, are endangered by the pending mass layoffs. It is not known at this point what this may mean for evictions and housing for Hawaii's poorer kupuna. Our lawmakers need to step up to the plate for find ways to fill this critical need.

Extending the program now is urgent. It is the right thing to do.

PABEA is in **STRONG** full support of EOA, AARP, Kupuna Caucus and the many other organizations and individuals testimony in support these bills.

Mahalo for your consideration



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB703 HD1, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

March 12, 2025

Aloha Chair(s) San Buenaventura & Chang, Vice Chair(s) Aquino & Hashimoto, Members of the Health & Human Services and Housing Committees:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB703 HD1, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports policies that preserve housing for our kupuna, ensuring that they can age in place and remain active in their communities.

The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports public funding going towards programs that ensure that our kupuna can age with dignity. Extending the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna will allow for more resources to go towards assisting kupuna who are struggling with housing instability, improving their standard of living and quality of life overall.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in Support of HB703 HD1, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 703 HD1: RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: Senate Committees on Health and Human Services, and Housing
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 3/12/25; 1:05 PM; via Videoconference or Room 225**

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Chang, and Members, Committees on Health and Human Services, and Housing:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **supports HB 703 HD1**, which extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 30, 2028.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax-exempt, community-based organization that has provided social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years. CCH serves elders, veterans, children, families, houseless individuals, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocate for the most vulnerable people in Hawai'i. We assist over 40,000 people annually across the state and have a long history of addressing affordable housing and homelessness.

CCH supports this bill to ensure that kupuna who are houseless or at imminent risk of homelessness continue to receive critical rental assistance. Kupuna who have secured housing through this program cannot afford their full rent and will face homelessness or houselessness again without the extension provided by this bill.

Elderly homelessness or houselessness is rising nationwide. The National Alliance to End Homelessness projects that homelessness among older adults will nearly triple by 2030. Catholic Charities Hawai'i is witnessing a growing number of elders experiencing houselessness for the first time—often due to losing long-term rental housing as landlords rebuild or renovate, or they struggle to keep up with rent increases on fixed low incomes, or they lose a household member's income (e.g., due to the death of a spouse or partner), or face health challenges.

CCH's Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides housing counseling for elderly residents of O'ahu aged 60+ who are seeking affordable rental housing. Currently, about 84 older adults are on HAP's waiting list for housing counseling—approximately 15% are already homeless, and 75% are at immediate risk of becoming houseless. Most HAP clients have very low incomes and can only afford \$300 to \$500 per month in rent, making rental assistance essential to prevent houselessness.

One typical HAP client is a woman in her mid-70s who maintained stable housing for over 10 years and consistently paid her rent. However, her landlord increased her rent until it matched her entire Social Security income. With limited English skills and no family or support network, she faced imminent houselessness and was terrified. Clients like her are a priority for HAP, but without immediate solutions like Rent Supplement, their housing insecurity remains dire.

We urge your support for this bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



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



HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 6:01:00 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/12/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB703 for Kupuna Housing. Please pass this bill.

HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 1:17:29 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/12/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. A core value of the State of Hawaii is to malama kupuna. With rising inflation, it is essential to provide support to our elderly to assure their safety, health, and overall well-being.

HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 12:57:20 AM

Testimony for HOU on 3/12/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB703HD1.to extend Kupuna Housing rental assistance till 2028 or forever if they qualify needing assistance.

LATE

HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:03:28 PM

Testimony for HOU on 3/12/2025 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to support Kupunas. Thank you.