

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
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IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

25:OED

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
10:01 AM – Room 211, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
HB 703, HD1, SD1
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Honorable Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of House Bill (HB) 703, HD1, SD1, 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.

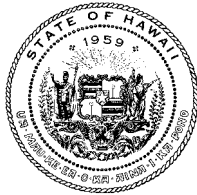
Shortly after the passage of Act 98, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, the HPHA contracted with Catholic Charities Hawaii to administer the State RSP for Kupuna and currently have 107 Kupuna



households enrolled in the program with an average rent supplement amount of \$408 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 Committee with its testimony. We thank you very much for your dedicated and continued support.



**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

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March 28, 2025

To: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members

From: John C (Jack) Lewin MD, Administrator, SHPDA

RE: HB703 HD1 SD1 – RELATED TO KUPUNA HOUSING (Hearing April 1 10:01 am)

Position: SUPPORT

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports HB703 HD1 SD1, 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



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO HOUSE BILL 703 HD1, SD1
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol

April 1st, 2025

10:01 a.m.

Room 211

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz and Vice Chair Aquino and , members of the Senate Committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) submits this testimony **SUPPORT of HB703 HD1 SD1**, which extends the State Rent Supplement Program for kupuna.

This bill aligns with OHA's mission to improve the conditions of Native Hawaiians and ensure their equitable access to opportunities that includes quality housing. It reflects our commitment to advancing the well-being of our beneficiaries and the broader community¹

The extension of the kupuna housing program is crucial for our Native Hawaiian elderly community and other communities. The program qualifies individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Affordable housing is one of the most pressing problems in Hawaii. Affordable housing solutions require a robust, comprehensive, multiprong approach to address affordable housing and homelessness crisis in the state of Hawai'i.

This bill addresses a component of the affordable housing issue by ensuring that low-income kupuna are not forced into homelessness through a combination of fixed incomes and rapidly rising rents. With 43% of Hawai'i's 65+ individuals living below the ALICE threshold there is a significant need for kupuna supplemental rent program. Although supplemental income of Social Security is beneficial for kupuna (11% in Hawai'i in 2022), it is not enough to bring kupuna to financial stability. As a result, for more than a decade, a substantial number of these households have been ALICE (32% in 2022). In 2022, monthly costs for the ALICE 65+ Survival Budget for one adult in Hawai'i were \$2,021 more than the average Social Security payment of \$1,657. With increasing costs and insufficient retirement savings, many kupuna have needed to continue working. In 2022, more than 70,500 people age 65 and over living below the ALICE Threshold in Hawai'i did not have

¹ Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 10-3.

retirement savings beyond Social Security. And it is estimated that nearly half of private-sector employees do not have access to an employer-provided retirement plan. In 2022, over 61,000 people age 65 and over in Hawai'i were working.²

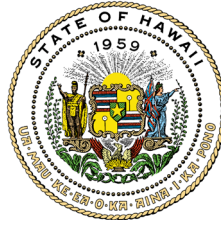
Many kupuna are at risk of being homeless. Due to fixed incomes of kupuna, the extension of a state rent supplement program targeted toward kupuna housing authority is needed for this vulnerable population.

OHA appreciates the opportunity to share our mana'o in support of HB703 HD1 SD1. Mahalo nui loa.

² 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>

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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB703 HD1, SD1
Relating to Kupuna Housing

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SENATOR DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, CHAIR
SENATOR SHARON Y. MORIWAKI, VICE CHAIR

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

Hearing: Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 10:01 A.M., Conference Room 211

EOA's Position: The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department of Health, **supports HB703 HD1,SD1**, relating to Kupuna Housing.

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.



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**The State Legislature
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Conference Room 211, 10:01 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 703, HD1, SD1 Relating to Kupuna Housing

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP supports H.B. 703, HD1, SD1 which extends the sunset date for the state rent supplement program that specifically target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Hawaii's high cost of housing is making it unaffordable for many, but especially for those at low or fixed income. These residents are more vulnerable of becoming dependent on other family members for shelter, or face homelessness. According to AARP/Statista analysis of close to 384 older adults (age 65+) in Hawaii are expected to be evicted in 2025 and more than 1,100+ older adults (age 65+) are expected to experience homelessness in 2025 in Hawaii. It is essential to assist older adults from facing housing crisis and therefore, the proposed H.B.703, HD, SD1 will help many vulnerable kūpuna from being displaced from their residence.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support **H.B. 703, HD1, SD1**.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB703 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

April 1, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Ways & Means Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB703 HD1 SD1, 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 Hawai'i supports public funding going towards programs that ensure that our kupuna can age with dignity. Extending the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna will provide critical assistance to 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 SD1, 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.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

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



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HB 703 HD1 SD1: RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Tuesday, 4/1/25, 10:01 AM; via Videoconference or Room 211**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

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

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH), a community-based organization, has provided social services in Hawai'i for over 77 years, assisting 40,000 people annually. Our services target the most vulnerable in Hawai'i, including elders, veterans, children, families, houseless individuals, and immigrants. We 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 again without the extension provided by this bill.

Elderly homelessness 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 homelessness 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 homelessness. This Rent Supplement Program would provide up to \$500/month to help with rental payments.

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 homelessness 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'eumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813 •



HB-703-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:31:07 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Testifying for Ohana Unity Party & Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

Aloha Mai Kākou, Stewards of Our Sacred ‘Ohana,

As Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM of the Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands and Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party (www.ohanaunityparty.com), I raise my voice like the winds of Hā‘upu to champion H.B. No. 703, "Relating to Kupuna Housing." This bill amends Act 98 of 2023, extending the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna from its June 30, 2026, sunset to June 30, 2028. With the mana of our ancestors, I implore you to weave this Act into law, for our kupuna—our living treasures—teeter on the edge of homelessness, and we must cradle them in aloha.

- Kupuna in Peril: The legislature rightly finds our elders at grave risk—rents have soared 25% statewide since 2020 (DBEDT 2024), while kupuna on fixed incomes, averaging \$28,000 yearly (SSA 2023), falter. In 2024, 1 in 5 Hawaii seniors faced housing instability (AARP Hawaii), a shadow darkening our islands’ soul.
- A Lifeline Extended: Act 98’s rent supplement program, launched in 2023, has sheltered 1,200 kupuna—those homeless or on the brink (HPHA 2024 data). Extending its life to 2028 ensures these elders, our storytellers and wisdom-keepers, remain housed, not cast adrift when the program’s sun sets in 2026.
- The Cost of Compassion: Each kupuna receives \$500 monthly (HPHA 2023), a modest \$7.2 million annual shield for 1,200 souls. Nationally, senior rent relief cuts homelessness 30% (HUD 2023 study)—H.B. No. 703 is our kingdom’s shield, sparing us the \$50,000-per-person cost of homelessness (Hawaii Homeless Initiative 2024).
- A Date Misaligned: The bill’s July 1, 2050, effective date is a scribe’s illusion, clashing with its urgent intent. I beseech you to align it with July 1, 2025, unleashing this magic before 2026’s cliff looms, ensuring no kupuna falls through time’s cracks.
- A Vision of Dignity: This Act is more than law—it’s a lei of protection for our elders, whose hands once cradled us. In 2023, Maui’s kupuna faced 40% rent hikes post-wildfires (Maui News), yet this program held them fast. Two more years weave a bridge to stability, honoring their legacy.

H.B. No. 703 is a sacred kuleana, extending the rent supplement program to 2028 to shelter our kupuna from the storm of rising costs. I urge you to correct the effective date to July 1, 2025, and pass it with the swiftness of Kāne's waters. Let us not forsake our elders but lift them high, as the koa lifts the sky, ensuring every kupuna rests in the embrace of home.

Mahalo for Your Aloha 'Āina,

With Royal Heart and Unity,
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire
HRM, Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands
Chairman, Ohana Unity Party
www.ohanaunityparty.com

HB-703-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2025 10:23:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support HB703. Please pass this bill.

HB-703-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 12:21:27 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:01:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB703 HD1 SD1.

Gregory Misakian