

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

JOHN MIZUNO
DIRECTOR
STATEWIDE OFFICE ON HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Testimony of **John M. Mizuno**
Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness
Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
&
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Friday, February 7, 2025
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

In consideration of
Senate Bill No. 878
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Chang, Vice Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Hashimoto and Committee Members,

My name is John Mizuno. I am the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness and the Director of the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS).

First, on behalf of my office and Governor Green, I want to thank the Senate for introducing SB878.

I am writing in strong support of **Senate Bill 878**, which extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to 6/30/2028.

We agree with the legislature's findings in **SB 878** that the State's kupuna are at significant risk of homelessness. As rental prices have experienced dramatic increases statewide, more kupuna, who are on fixed incomes, struggle to secure affordable housing. Every day we strive to take care of our Kupuna that are facing housing instability and try our very best to house them into our kauhales.

We also agree that presently, the state rent supplemental program for kupuna provides support for qualified kupuna who are homeless or at imminent risk of being homeless; however, this critical program will be sunset in 2026, creating uncertainty for existing participants in the program.

John M. Mizuno Testimony on SB878

Joint Senate Committee on Health and Human Services and the Committee on Housing

February 7, 2025

Page 2

We strongly agree that extending the sunset date will ensure continued access to critical rent supplement assistance and that the purpose of this Act is to extend the sunset date of the state rent supplemental program for kupuna to continue to accommodate the housing needs of qualified participants is so important.

Thank you Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Chang, Vice Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Hashimoto and Committee Members, for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 878. I am grateful for your consideration of this important measure and its positive impact on the lives of our precious kupuna. We appreciate the legislature's continued commitment to helping those facing housing instability, and especially those kupuna who are homeless or at imminent risk of being homeless.

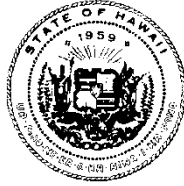
Mahalo!

Brandon Mitsuda

Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions

Special Assistant

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO:

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

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

Friday, February 7, 2025
1:00 PM – Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SB 878
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Honorable Chair San Buenaventura and Honorable Chair Chang, and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services and the Senate Committee on Housing, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill (SB) 878, 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.

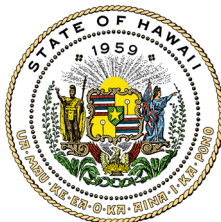
Shortly after the passage of Act 98, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, the HPHA contracted with Catholic Charities Hawaii to administer the State RSP for Kupuna and currently have 33 Kupuna households enrolled in the program, with an average rent supplement amount of \$434 per Kupuna household, with approximately \$110,000 distributed to landlords.

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.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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 SB878
Relating to Kupuna Housing

LATE

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 Date: Friday, February 7, 2025 Room Number: 225
1:00 P.M. via Videoconference

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, supports SB878 SD2, Relating to Kupuna Housing.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure does not include an appropriation.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to temporarily extend the sunset date for
5 the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to 6/30/28. The program provides support to
6 qualified kupuna, who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

7 Creative, long-term, affordable housing strategies are needed to prevent individuals and
8 families, who are financially struggling and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. According
9 to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data the poverty rate amongst Americans age sixty-five and
10 older has increased from 8.9% in 2020 to 10.3% in 2021. As housing costs and inflation rise,

1 kupuna, who rely on retirement income from Social Security and/or are on fixed incomes, are
2 struggling to pay for basic necessities. As a result, kupuna are forced to cut back on essential
3 expenses, such as food, transportation, and medication just to stretch their finite funds. Any
4 setback in their income can affect their ability to pay their mortgage or rent and put them at risk
5 of becoming homeless.

6 The State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna can also help to create a pathway out of
7 homelessness by reducing the financial burden from Hawaii's high rental costs, provide stable
8 housing which can lead to better physical and mental health, and reduce the strain on emergency
9 shelters. Extending this critical program helps to support the aging population and ensure
10 kūpuna have access to safe and affordable housing.

11 **Recommendation:** The EOA supports this measure.

12 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-878

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 10:45:14 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I stand in strong support of SB878. I am presently experiencing issues at my low income senior housing at Franciscan Vistas Ewa. The Indigo Property management, Le Don, who hired the previous Community Director Kathy McAlister from her home state in Washington, does not understand laws, whether local, state or federal and is trying to evict me for nonpayment. Due to retaliation of a City and County Section 8 Examiner, Elsie Caneso, I have been kicked off the program because I complained about her lack of clerical skills, her attempt to control scheduling of Inspectors, and inability to read, write, and communicate effectively in English, as well as her immediate supervisor.

I have reported my issues to my legislative Representative Garcia, Senator Fevella, and Councilman August Tulba, and have even testified at Housing/Homeless Coalition meetings with John Mizuno. Housing and Urban Development have even stepped in and referred me to Kerry Kaneshiro at C&C. Caneso has terminated my Section 8 since November, although she has sent me conflicting paperwork that her computer produces that she apparently cannot comprehend. One to recertify in May, but she No Showed on the telephone interview 1/9/25 she had talked about in December, and after I turned in all the required paperwork on 12/17/24. She also sent me a certificate to relocate by 1/30/25, effective 12/1/24 but received in the middle of the month.

At FVE, I have complained to St. Francis Healthcare Systems in February 2022 and again in July 2024, but both times referred to Le Don of Indigo, their property manager who doesn't understand that FVE is for low income senior housing, but McAlister being unable to fill vacancies because of her discrimination of locals, instead marketed to the East Coast and Europe as real estate investment. These residents sold businesses and their homes to live in our islands and many was taught to hide bank accounts by an Indigo staff who did their taxes. This is a definite conflict of interest and many other conflicts that McAlister created here and the older residents still try to enforce, alienating many newer residents with their gossip and control issues. But Le Don tries to still implement, putting the present younger director in a difficult position with residents who argue and do not read or are unable to read the rules of the 48+ page rental contract.

Ignorance of those in control of housing, whether property managers, developers, and real estate investors drive up housing market values, where it is no longer affordable to local residents born and raised here including those of Native Hawaiian descent. Many local residents become homeless and isolated due to stigma of labels created by those in power. Please protect the kupuna and keep us in Hawaii by supporting SB878 and even keeping it permanent!

SB-878

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 12:21:32 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support this bill to extend Kupuna housing supplements. Our costs of housing are so expensive that without some assistance, many of our kupuna face homelessness and living on the streets. This can avoid financial disaster for them and keep them healthier.

Thank you for supporting the needs of vulnerable members of our community.

SB-878

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 8:35:23 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/7/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry SUPPORT 878 SB RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING.