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Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Wednesday, March 27, 2019
2:30 PM - Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
SB 1020, SD2, HD1
RELATING TO RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Honorable Chair Luke, and Members of the House Committee on Finance, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning Senate Bill (SB) 1020, SD2, HD1, relating to rental assistance.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) **supports the intent, with comments,** of SB 1020, SD2, HD1, which appropriates funds to the HPHA for its Rent Supplement Program to assist families at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence with obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

The HPHA does not currently have staff with a deep understanding of homelessness and domestic violence expertise to establish and administer the kind of pilot program that is being discussed in this measure. The HPHA's State Rent Supplement Program assists all of our most disadvantaged populations, including the population that is being targeted for this pilot program.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Committee with the HPHA's testimony regarding SB 1020, SD2, HD1. We thank you very much for your dedicated support.

SB-1020-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/25/2019 8:23:00 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2019 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mike Goodman	Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force	Support	Yes

Comments:

TO: The House Committee of Finance
FROM: Mike Goodman, Director, The Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force and Member, Partners In Care Advocacy Committee.
RE: SB1020 SD2 HD1
HEARING: Wednesday, March 27, 2019, 2:30 PM Room 308

Dear Representative Luke, Chair and Representative Cullen, Vice Chair, and all other Members of the Committee on Finance; thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of SB1020, and to propose and amendment to the language of SECTION 2.

This bill provides crucial funding for a rental assistance pilot program which as a practical matter, will primarily serve women with children who are forced to flee their homes because of domestic violence.

We propose the following amendment to SECTION 2:

SECTION 2 currently states “. . . *provided that the funds appropriated shall be used to assist families at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence with obtaining and maintaining permanent housing . . .*” The Hawaii Kai Homeless Task Force recommends broadening this language to avoid creating service gaps. For example, the phrase “*permanent housing*” could prevent the program from subsidizing temporary housing for a mother and children fleeing an abusive husband. The phrase “*at imminent risk of homelessness*” could prevent those who are already homeless from obtaining benefits. **We therefore recommend the following language: “[] *provided that the funds appropriated shall be used to assist families at imminent risk of homelessness or who are homeless due to domestic violence with obtaining housing . . .*”**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair
Members, Committee on Finance

FROM: Pedro Haro, Advocacy Director, PHOCUSED

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB 1020, SD2, HD1 RELATING TO RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Hearing: March 27, 2019 at 2:30 pm
Conference Room 308

IN SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the Committee on Finance:

I am Pedro Haro, Advocacy Director for PHOCUSED. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Senate Bill 1020, SD2, HD1 **with suggested amendments**.

PHOCUSED is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to increasing the safety for, visibility of, and investment in the children and adults in Hawaii who are marginalized, impoverished, and under-served. Our organization has been a leading voice in advocating for our homeless populations since our formation, as the membership of PHOCUSED and our Board of Directors represent many of the major providers of human services across our state.

This bill originally aimed to accomplish important inter-related solutions to reach a gap group within the homeless community that are not financially stable enough to retain housing.

PHOCUSED is a membership and advocacy organization for health and human services in Hawaii, which works together with community stakeholders to collectively impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our state. Our commitment to the people is reflected in our name – Protecting Hawaii's 'Ohana, Children, Under-Served, Elderly, and Disabled. We are guided by the shared commitment of our members to protect the interests of Hawaii's people and the sector which seeks to provide them with quality programs and services.



PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

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PHOCUSED, as the former Administrator of the Families Coordinated Entry System, identified a gap group of homeless families; there are a large number of children and their families who are homeless due to economic reasons and do not need traditional case management (low-vulnerability, non-chronic). Coupled with the financial case management the program would provide, this program will be essential to homeless children and their families who are homeless simply because they are struggling economically. The pilot project will allow shallow, but long-term, rental subsidies meant to stabilize families that are not facing issues such as drug abuse or mental health crisis. All family members, including children, will receive guidance from a financial case manager.

In the last amendments to this bill, we believe that the committee inadvertently left out mentioning that the point of this change was to prioritize children and their subsequent families, and **therefore we ask for language to be adopted from its previous iteration that prioritizes children as part of the bill.**

We also agree with the Senate Committees on Housing and Human Services that all families, not only those with children who are homeless as a result of domestic violence, can benefit from this initiative. Therefore, **we believe the program should be expanded to encompass all families with a priority placed on those families who are experiencing domestic violence.**

As we continue to see the tide changing in the amount of homeless individuals and families, we have the responsibility to identify and assist gap groups that are at risk of being left behind. This bill's intent is to assist those gap groups of homeless families that may otherwise fall through the cracks. We urge you to please consider and pass Senate Bill 1020, SD2, HD1.

PHOCUSED is a membership and advocacy organization for health and human services in Hawaii, which works together with community stakeholders to collectively impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our state. Our commitment to the people is reflected in our name – Protecting Hawaii's 'Ohana, Children, Under-Served, Elderly, and Disabled. We are guided by the shared commitment of our members to protect the interests of Hawaii's people and the sector which seeks to provide them with quality programs and services.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

LATE

COMMENTS on SB 1020 SD2, HD1: Relating to Rental Assistance

TO: Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair, Representative Ty Cullen, Vice Chair; and Members, Committee on Finance
FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Legislative Liaison, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Wednesday, 3/27/19; 2:30 PM; CR 308**

Dear Representative Luke, Chair, Representative Cullen, Vice Chair, and Members, Committee on Finance

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 1020, SD2, HD1 for a rental assistance program to house homeless children. I am Betty Lou Larson, with Catholic Charities Hawai'i. We are a member of Partners in Care. We support the intent of this bill, but urge that it be amended to include all homeless/at risk families, not just those homeless due to domestic violence.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 70 years. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawai'i.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i urges that this program **serve all families with minor children experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness, including families facing homelessness due to domestic violence**, and provide rental subsidies to obtain and maintain permanent housing.

This funding would support a creative new pathway for families to become housed and remain housed. Overall, families continue to be severely housing cost-burdened. Half of isle households are living on a survival budget with barely enough to cover basic needs, much less save anything for an emergency, and can easily fall into homelessness. Many jobs do not pay enough to enable families to afford the astronomical housing costs in Hawaii. The proposed intervention will help struggling families to remain housed if they face evictions, as well as move homeless families into housing.

Many families fall into homelessness just due their inability to pay a market rent. They could rapidly be housed with shallow rental assistance, which, when tied to financial case management, could boost both housing and economic stability. The proposed pilot program would make a long-lasting impact on the lives of the children in these families, including those facing domestic violence. National research has shown that as many as 57% of all homeless women report domestic violence as the immediate cause for their homelessness. 80% of homeless women with children had previously experienced domestic violence. We need to help these traumatized families before they fall into homelessness.

To prevent children from lingering in homelessness, we urge the changes suggested. Please contact me at (808) 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org with any questions.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 373-0356 • bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org





March 27, 2019

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair House Finance Committee
Representative Ty Cullen, Vice-chair House Finance

Re: SB 1020, SD 2, HD 1- Relating to Homelessness

Dear Representatives Luke, Cullen and Members of the House
Committee:

My name is Gail Breakey, Chair of the Board of Directors, United Church of Christ Transition House, a program for survivors of domestic violence, testifying in support of SB 1020. This bill will provide rental assistance for a gap group within the homeless community that are not financially stable enough to retain housing but have no other underlying issues.

Fear of homelessness is a major reason why many survivors of domestic violence fear to leave violent situations. The UCCTH provides transition housing for up to one year for survivors. During this time a major challenge is to assist them in finding on-going housing. This has become increasingly difficult in recent years due to the housing crisis and ever-increasing costs of rent.



The pilot project will allow shallow, but long-term, rental subsidies meant to stabilize families that are not facing issues such as drug abuse or mental health crisis. Coupled with the financial case management the program would provide, this program will be essential to the families we serve

All homeless families, not only those with children who are at risk for homeless as a result of domestic violence, stand to benefit from this program. Therefore, the program should be expanded to encompass all families with a priority placed on those families who are experiencing domestic violence. Providing long-term, shallow rent subsidy is essential to serve this gap group of homeless children and their families over a longer period of time as they adapt to a new environment than the short-term, emergency assistance current programs allow.

The provisions of this bill will assist gap groups of families that may otherwise become or remain homeless. We urge you to consider and fund Senate Bill 1020. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Gail Breakey

Gail Breakey, Board Chair

United Church of Christ Transition House

Chair Luke

Vice Chair Cullen

House Committee on Finance

3/27/19, Conference Room 308

Testimony in Support of SB1020 SD2 HD2

Aloha,

My name is Miranda Shelly and I am a graduate student at the UH Manoa school of social work. I am testifying in support of SB1020 SD2 HD2. As a social work student, I have seen both through my studies and through my practicum experience that domestic violence has a profound impact on families, particularly children. Many victims of domestic violence who attempt to distance themselves from their abuser(s) become homeless as a result, which in turn creates additional risks to their safety. Becoming homeless may pose such a great risk to these victims that they instead choose to stay with/return to their abuser(s), and thus continue to be trapped in a cycle of violence.

A rental assistance program would be able to help victims of domestic violence and their minor children to safely obtain housing and economic stability. Receiving financial management and budget counseling will also help to educate these families on how to maintain stability in the future, thereby preventing them from becoming homeless or returning to an abusive relationship out of financial need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Miranda Shelly



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LATE

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

March 27, 2019

TO: The Honorable Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Scott Morishige, MSW, Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 1020 SD2 HD1 – RELATING TO RENTAL ASSISTANCE**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 27, 2019, 2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness supports the intent of this bill, and respectfully offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) for its rent supplement program to assist families at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence with obtaining and maintaining permanent housing.

The Coordinator notes that the state rent supplement program is an effective tool in reducing and preventing homelessness. The program provides a shallow rent subsidy for households that are low-income and would not otherwise be able to cover the full cost of rent on their own. Because the level of funding for the state rent supplement program is capped at a maximum of \$500 per month per household, the program has the ability to address a large number of households and is one of the more cost-effective programs to address homelessness. In addition to directly assist homeless individuals and families to access housing, the state rent supplement program prevents homelessness for households that – but for the additional funding provided by the program – find themselves at imminent risk of homelessness.

As currently drafted, the bill appears to restrict the additional funding provided to assist only families at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence. According to the

2018 statewide Point in Time Count, only 318 individuals statewide reported that they were survivors of domestic violence, and households may be reluctant to specifically identify themselves as domestic violence survivors due to safety reasons. The Coordinator notes that other measures during this legislative session have also been proposed to increase funding for the state rent supplement program for other target populations, such as the elderly. Accordingly, if this bill proceeds, the Coordinator respectfully requests that the legislature consider increasing the current level of appropriation for the state rent supplement program without restrictions to limit services to a specific target population, such as survivors of domestic violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE

SB-1020-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/27/2019 2:30:12 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/27/2019 2:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rainbow	Rainbow Family 808	Support	Yes

Comments:

Rainbow Family 808 Strongly supports SB1020 for the safety of women and children especially in Domestic Violence situations. Please pass this bill for our friends and family members who need all the help we can give them.



LATE

TO: Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and Members of the House Committee on Finance

FROM: Ryan Kusumoto, President & CEO of Parents And Children Together (PACT)

DATE/LOCATION: March 27, 2019; 2:30 p.m., Conference Room 308

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1020 SD 2– RELATING TO RENTAL ASSISTANCE

We ask you to support SB 1020 which would create a rental assistance pilot program to assist families with minor children experiencing, or at imminent risk of, homelessness due to domestic violence.

Domestic violence survivors endure the trauma of the abuse itself but also must deal with additional baggage in the wake of the drama and destruction. There is often the additional burden of legal follow up, medical and health related issues, necessity to seek new shelter, not to mention the healing process itself and the time and effort that is associated with these many tasks on top of normal day to day life. With rental assistance, we are minimizing the risk of families being and/or remaining unsheltered. This bill would support survivors and provide them with assistance to accomplish important tasks, like seeking safe shelter, on their path towards hope and healing.

As a provider of domestic violence support services including shelters, we are extremely aware of the overwhelming number of crimes related to relationship violence and the hardship this places on families, especially those with minor children. The more we can do to provide critical assistance in times of crisis, the more opportunities we create for all individuals to thrive beyond the trauma and navigate a path towards a safe and promising future.

Founded in 1968, Parents And Children Together (PACT) is one of Hawaii's not-for-profit organizations providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, PACT helps families identify, address and successfully resolve challenges through its 18 programs. Among its 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 in **support of SB 1020 SD 2**, please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or rkusumoto@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.