



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 4, 2021

TO: The Honorable Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

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

SUBJECT: **SB 221– RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Thursday, February 4, 2021, 3:01 p.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator appreciates the intent of this measure and offers comments.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill is to allow the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, in conjunction with the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), to develop plans for the four counties to coordinate the services and shelter facilities of public agencies and nonprofit organizations to meet the concerns of communities impacted by homelessness and the needs of the homeless population within each county.

The Coordinator acknowledges that each county has unique regional needs, and that coordination with the four counties is critical. As Chair of the HICH, the Coordinator actively coordinates statewide efforts to address homelessness. Section 346-381(b) requires the HICH to "formulate, and advise the governor on the implementation of, a unified ten-year statewide plan to address homelessness in all Hawaii counties." The ten-year plan is developed and implemented in close collaboration with homeless coordinators in the four counties, who each serve on the HICH and represent the Mayor of their respective county. This bill will allow for specific regional plans for each county to complement the overall ten-year plan.

Since 2016, the State and counties collectively emphasized a housing-focused approach to homelessness, resulting in a statewide reduction in the homelessness Point in Time Count and increased placements to permanent housing. This collaborative approach included the efforts of several State departments, including Department of Human Services, Department of Health, and the Department of Education among others. Between 2015 and 2020, the number of homeless individuals in the Point in Time count decreased by 1,463 individuals (18.5%). In addition, the percentage of homeless individuals placed into permanent housing from homeless programs increased from one-third in 2016 to over fifty percent in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Beginning in 2019, 'Ohana Zone programs administered by the Coordinator enable the counties to adopt innovative approaches to address homelessness in their individual communities and assisted the counties in leveraging additional capital funds through the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC). Through the ['Ohana Zone pilot program](#), the Coordinator directly contracts with the four counties to administer a range of homeless shelter and housing programs. As of November 30, 2020, 'Ohana Zones served 3,216 individuals statewide, including 625 individuals (20%) placed into permanent housing.

More recent examples of collaboration with the counties include the [Behavioral Health & Homeless Statewide Unified Response Group \(BHHSURG\)](#) and monthly homeless funders meetings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the BHHSURG conducted weekly webinars to disseminate information, and established statewide hubs for distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). In addition, the homeless funders group has examined the different payors and funding streams for homelessness services to facilitate identification of service gaps, overlap, and time-limited funding, as well as opportunities for increased alignment. A product of the funders group is a [homelessness fiscal map of federal, state, and local funding](#) for homelessness services that was shared with the HICH in December 2020.

If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator will continue actively partnering with the four counties on strategies to further strengthen collaboration and to effectively address regional needs, including an assessment of additional resources that may be required.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HAWAII YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 904 Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

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

Carole Gruskin, President

Judith F. Clark, Executive Director

Bay Clinic

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hawaii

Big Island Substance Abuse Council

Bobby Benson Center

Child and Family Service

Coalition for a Drug Free Hawaii

Collins Consulting, LLC

Domestic Violence Action Center

EPIC, Inc.

Family Programs Hawaii

Family Support Hawaii

Friends of the Children of West Hawaii

Friends of the Children's Justice Center of Maui

Hale Kipa, Inc.

Hale 'Opio Kauai, Inc.

Hawaii Children's Action Network

Hawaii Health & Harm

Reduction Center

Ho'ola Na Pua

Kahi Mohala

Kokua Kalihi Valley

Kokua Ohana Aloha (KOA)

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 (PACT)

PHOCUSED

PFLAG – Kona Big Island

Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest and

Hawaiian Islands

Residential Youth Services

& Empowerment (RYSE)

Salvation Army Family

Intervention Services

Sex Abuse Treatment Center

Susannah Wesley Community Center

The Catalyst Group

February 2, 2021

To: Senator Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
And members of the Committee on Human Services

Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair
And members of the Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental,
and Military Affairs

Testimony in Support of SB 221 Relating to Homelessness

Hawaii Youth Services Network, a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 22 Relating to Minors

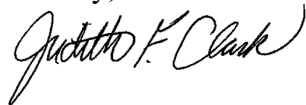
Homelessness does not have one size fits all solutions. Each community and each subpopulation has differing issues and needs. Communities and counties have differing resources to apply to the problem. Thus, developing plans for each county and for communities within those counties makes sense.

Children and youth, especially those who living on the streets without support or guidance from their families, are the most vulnerable and invisible segment of our homeless population. Plans to address homelessness must consider their specific needs, which are quite different from families and solo adults.

Youth homelessness providers must be included in the plan development process. Hawaii Youth Services Network will participate if this bill is passed.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH
Executive Director



**To: Senate Committee on Human Services and Senate Committee on Public Safety,
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs**

Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 4, 2021 at 3:01 pm

Re: Comments on SB221

From: Heather Lusk, Hawaii Health and Harm Reduction Center

Dear Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committees,

The Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC) would like to offer comments on SB221 relating to homelessness. HHHRC has worked closely with Mr. Scott Morishige, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness since he first started in the position. Mr. Morishige was instrumental in the implementation of several projects we work with including Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) where much needed linkage with the Sheriffs and other public safety stakeholders. In fact, HHHRC strongly credits Scott with helping make the LEAD pilot successful with his willingness to work with our staff and the evaluators to ensure integration of our efforts into the greater homeless continuum of care. Mr. Morishige has been a much needed resource for those of us working to combat homelessness from the non-profit sector as he links us with efforts at the State and County level, helps build relationships among leaders and has shared valuable federal resources (such as from USICH) to inform our activities.

HHHRC'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. While not a "traditional" homeless service agency, more than half of our clients/patients struggle with homelessness and we have been very active in providing housing services.

HHHRC respectfully requests that SB221 be amended to include comments about Mr. Morishige's accomplishments as well as provide the flexibility for the Office of Governors' Coordinator on Homelessness so it can continue to provide the support to agencies like HHHRC.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

COMMENTS for: SB 221: RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair; Senator Clarence K. Nishimoto, Chair; and Members, Committees on Human Services, and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

FROM: Rob Van Tassell, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: Thursday, 2/4/2021, 3:01 PM, via Videoconference

Chair San Buenaventura, Chair Nishimoto, and Members, Committees on Human Services and Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments for SB 221, which would allow the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness to develop plans for the various counties to coordinate services and shelters to meet the concerns and needs of communities impacted by homelessness. I am Rob Van Tassell from Catholic Charities Hawaii.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, non-profit agency that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 70 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable in Hawaii. **Our current homeless programs work very closely with the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness, Mr. Scott Morishige and his team.**

We support the intent of this bill, but are concerned that it might duplicate efforts already undertaken for regional approaches to end homelessness. Furthermore, local stakeholders and services providers know the needs of their communities. Each have developed plans already for their communities and we have seen Mr. Morishige and his team very involved in collaborating with and supporting these regional initiatives in each county.

There is regular and consistent coordination and communication between all parties. He works closely with Partners in Care on Oahu and the county to plan for needs and services, especially in this time of the pandemic. In addition, we also have witnessed Mr. Morishige respond quickly and help to coordinate efforts on the neighbor islands. He has brought together Partners In Care and Bridging the Gap (providers on the Neighbor Islands) for increased collaboration.

He is a leader in the homeless field and has a big impact on services. This is evident in his work as head of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH). This assembly provides an environment for providers from across the state and counties to discuss and provide input that impacts our homeless system and resources. Mr. Morishige is fair and ensures that each provider is heard and considers all members' suggestions and comments.

For questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson, at 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org



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



SB-221

Submitted on: 2/2/2021 2:15:05 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/4/2021 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support SB221.

Thank you,

Andrea Quinn