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Corey Rosenlee  
President  
Osa Tui Jr.  
Vice President  
Logan Okita  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Wilbert Holck  
Executive Director

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
and THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

RE: SB 804 - RELATING TO TEACHER RENTAL HOUSING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

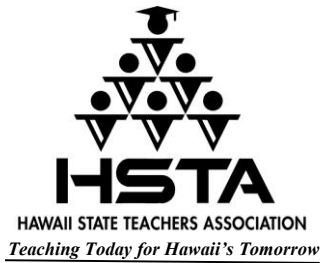
COREY ROSENLEE, PRESIDENT  
HAWAII STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

Chair Chang, Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawaii State Teachers Association **supports SB 804**, relating to teacher rental housing. This bill authorizes the Hawaii Public Housing Authority and Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to provide rental housing projects for teachers employed by the Department of Education and public charter schools. Appropriates funds for the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. Appropriates funds for deposit into the dwelling unit revolving fund. Requires the Department of Education to lease land and contract with private entities for the development, management, maintenance, or revitalization of teacher housing. Permits a project owner to lease teacher housing to other eligible tenants if occupancy of teacher housing falls below 95 per cent.

Hawai'i continues to suffer from a shortage of licensed teachers with over 1000 vacancies each year. Financial incentives and affordable options for teacher housing are key strategies for the recruitment and retention of teachers, particularly given that Hawai'i's teacher salaries continue to trail the nation, when adjusted for cost of living. Housing is a big portion of each teacher's paycheck.

IF we concentrate on retaining our teachers, the Department of Education would not have to focus so much on the recruitment of teachers. **To recruit and retain effective educators, policymakers must find ways to lessen the financial burden of being a public school teacher.** Establishing a teacher rental housing program is a good first step. In the islands, where new housing rarely becomes available, the percentage of renters who face cost burdens—financial handicaps



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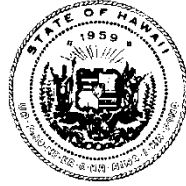
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incurred by people spending over 30 percent of their income on housing—is roughly 57 percent, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition. Many of those cash-strapped renters are state educators, who are chronically underpaid. To make ends meet, many teachers are forced to pick up second and third jobs, live in cramped studio apartments, and cut back on necessities like medical and dental care. Thus they cannot devote their full attention to their students and the preparation of lessons and grading that they usually complete after school once their students have left for the day. Instead, they are rushing off to their second or even third jobs when they would much rather concentrate on their teaching duties and their students.

**Thus, a teacher rental housing program will, as long as it is affordable for teachers, assist them in attaining sustainable and stable residency, while staving off crushing debt burdens. It would also make the teaching profession more attractive by increasing educators' ability to find affordable housing that won't take their whole paycheck.**

To take care of the needs of Hawaii's hardworking teachers, the Hawaii State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE  
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

Statement of  
**Hakim Ouansafi**

Hawaii Public Housing Authority  
Before the

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Tuesday, February 16, 2021**  
**1:30 PM - Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol**

In consideration of

**SB 804**

**RELATING TO TEACHER RENTAL HOUSING**

Honorable Chair Chang, Honorable Chair Kidani, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing and Members of the Senate Committee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony concerning Senate Bill (SB) 804, relating to teacher rental housing.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) **supports** SB 804, which authorizes the Hawaii Public Housing Authority and Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to provide rental housing projects for teachers employed by the Department of Education and public charter schools. Appropriates funds for the Hawaii Public Housing Authority. Appropriates funds for deposit into the dwelling unit revolving fund. Requires the Department of Education to lease land and contract with private entities for the development, management, maintenance, or revitalization of teacher housing. Permits a project owner to lease teacher housing to other eligible tenants if occupancy of teacher housing falls below 95 per cent.

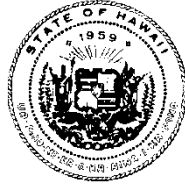
The HPHA fully supports the creation of teacher rental housing and has the expertise to develop, manage and work with the Department of Education and the HHFDC in creating communities that will attract and retain qualified public-school teachers.

Hawaii Revised Statutes §356D(2)(e) authorizes the HPHA, subject to the availability of funds, to contract or sponsor with any county, housing authority, or person an experimental or demonstration housing project designed to meet the needs of teachers.

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

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

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
FAX: (808) 587-0600

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Statement of  
**DENISE ISERI-MATSUBARA**  
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

February 16, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 225

In consideration of  
**S.B. 804**  
**RELATING TO TEACHER RENTAL HOUSING.**

The HHFDC **supports the intent** of Part III of S.B. 804, provided that it does not adversely impact priorities set forth in the Executive Biennium Budget.

Part III of S.B. 804 amends §201H-12, HRS to expand HHFDC's authority to develop mixed-use housing projects, to include rental housing for teachers, in conjunction with the Department of Education. It also appropriates \$10,000,000 in General Funds for deposit into the Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund, earmarked for the development of rental housing for teachers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-804**

Submitted on: 2/8/2021 9:53:30 AM

Testimony for HOU on 2/16/2021 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Meagan-Joi Kimsel	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs and members of the committee;

Aloha mai kākou! My name is Loke Kimsel, I am a Native to these lands and I am a resident of the Wai'anae community. I believe that this bill will continue to harm locals into driving us out of Hawaii while transplanting tourists. This bill also highlights the lack of care for our economy. The cost is \$10 million a year at a time where our government has no money and more taxes is the last thing people need. The cost will surely increase year after year and we'll never be rid of the program even after it reveals itself to be a failure. This would mean more low income housing developments around the island. No one wants these developments in their neighborhood. The state does a poor job at managing these housings and they soon turn into a dumping ground. When teachers no longer want to rent from these housings they will leave it vacant. The bill states "it can then go to other low income applicants." What a waste! This will incentivize teachers to rent and then punish them if they purchase a home. Why buy a home when you can rent one at bottom dollar? There are many O'ahu community members who own homes and rent them to teachers around the island. This would be unfair competition from the government in an already crowded and competitive market. This will hurt more local families who have invested in housing in Hawai'i. The government has no business competing with the people and should stay out of the market. This will not solve the high cost of living and housing in Hawai'i.

I strongly oppose this bill!

Me ke aloha,

Loke Kimsel

**SB-804**

Submitted on: 2/4/2021 6:23:11 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/16/2021 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
cheryl B.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SUPPORT. Any way that we can assist educators is important. We need to show the respect for the profession of educators.

**SB-804**

Submitted on: 2/5/2021 10:59:46 AM

Testimony for HOU on 2/16/2021 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Tyffiny Keliiaa	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha.

My name is Tyffiny Keliiaa. I am a single mother of two and a special education teacher.

I'd like to thank the Housing and Education committees for their time and effort in considering the needs of teachers here in Hawaii. I am, however, in opposition of SB804.

As the proposed bill states, there is a terrible shortage of highly qualified teachers here in Hawai'i. In addition to that, but definitely not directly related, is the fact that there is also a terrible shortage of affordable housing in Hawai'i, if such thing even exists. Developing a housing project for teachers seems like a lackluster plan to band-aid the real issue. The real issue is retaining and recruiting HIGHLY QUALIFIED professionals, a.k.a. teachers, in Hawaii public and charter schools. The solution is not in providing a low-income housing project specifically for highly qualified professionals. Would you do that for yourselves as the highly qualified professionals that you are, or would you make sure your salary was commensurate to the service you provide to your community as a politician? This bill tells me, as an educator with years of experience and a master's degree, that my value is that which deserves to remain low-income in a housing project that the state develops. I'm sorry, but I believe the services a teacher provides to his/her community deserves the opportunity to rent a home or incentives to purchase a home in the state in which he/she teaches. Other states provide such incentives and/or salaries that respect the value teachers bring to their citizens, therefore naturally being able to retain and recruit, which includes the recruitment of Hawai'i teachers. I liken a teacher housing project to that of public transportation. Though it is offered as a form of transportation to all, most people would still rather own their own vehicle. The same goes for housing. As much as the housing would be available to me and others like me, I'd much rather have the opportunity to use my salary to own my own home. I am not a politician, and I respect the knowledge you hold in your areas of expertise, but I have a few suggestions you may want to consider to remedy the issue of retention and recruitment.

- Better tuition assistance/stipends for undergraduates seeking a degree in education/special education requiring a certain number of years of service to the Hawaii Department of Education (HIDOE)



- Tax breaks to home owners who lease to licensed teacher working for HIDOE at an affordable rate (affordable according to a predetermined guideline based on teacher salary pay grades)
- Down-payment assistance/stipends for licensed teachers looking to purchase a home
- Affordable family medical insurance plans for licensed teachers (allows teachers to have more money to put towards their rent/mortgage while also taking on the responsibility of paying into their own family's health insurance)

My point is, there are other solutions that would be more effective in retaining and recruiting highly qualified teachers than putting them in a low-income housing project. We're educated hard-working individuals who put our students first. We deserve the opportunity to rent/own a home within our means outside of a housing project. We prefer a hand-up, not a hand out. Let's use the \$10,000,000 in a better way.

Mahalo.

Tyffiny Keliiaa, MEd CS