

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

February 18, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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

SUBJECT: SB 2371 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

Hearing: Friday, February 18, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this bill, and respectfully offers comments. If this measure proceeds, the Coordinator requests that any appropriation not reduce or replace budget priorities identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish a Statewide Homelessness Information System (HMIS) Working Group to assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide information system that collects and tracks real-time data related to homelessness in the State, including availability of services, shelters, and low-cost housing in various regions of the State, that would be utilized by various government agencies to provide efficient and effective assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness or at-risk individuals.

The Coordinator appreciates the amendments of the Senate Committee on Human Services to establish a working group to assess the feasibility of creating a statewide homelessness information system and including representatives of the two Continua of Care (CoCs) – Partners in Care and Bridging the Gap) as members of the working group. Notably, the CoCs administer the existing HMIS databases and receive federal funding to maintain the databases and to produce public-facing reports and dashboards to facilitate understanding of the data.

Comprehensive data is critical to develop, implement, and evaluate policies and programs to reduce homelessness statewide. Accordingly, the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) – a 27-member advisory council – regularly reviews data regarding homeless system performance metrics at its quarterly meetings. The data reviewed by the HICH includes: 1) Statewide Point in Time (PIT) count data; 2) Statewide Housing Inventory Count (HIC) data; 3) The percentage of individuals exiting a homeless program into permanent housing; and 4) The length of stay in homeless emergency and transitional shelters. This data is posted online at <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/data>. In addition, an overview of the homelessness system and system performance metrics is submitted annually to the Legislature as required by statute.¹

The Coordinator has engaged in numerous other efforts to utilize data to strengthen local efforts to reduce homelessness. For example, the Coordinator and staff produce a [Daily Emergency Shelter Vacancy List](#) that includes vacancy data from both government and privately funded emergency shelters statewide.² In addition, the Coordinator worked with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) and the Oahu CoC Partners In Care to facilitate a data-sharing agreement to identify homeless native Hawaiian beneficiaries on the DHHL waitlist who were in the PIT count.

If this measure passes, the Coordinator is committed to actively participating in the work group and coordinating with all members.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ Annual reports, as well as other reports presented at the regular meetings of the HICH, are compiled at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/hich/hich-reports/>.

² The shelter vacancy report is compiled and e-mailed to stakeholders Monday to Friday, and available online at: <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/daily-emergency-shelter-vacancy/>.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CATHY BETTS
DIRECTOR

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 16, 2022

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: SB 2371 SD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

HEARING: February 18, 2022 10:00 a.m.
Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the measure's intent, provides comments, and suggests an amendment.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this measure is to establish a Statewide Homelessness Information System Working Group to assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide information system that collects and tracks real-time data related to homelessness in the State, including availability of services, shelters, and low-cost housing in various regions of the State, that could be utilized by various government agencies to provide efficient and effective assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness or at-risk individuals. Effective 12/31/2050.
(SD1)

The HD1 made significant amendments as follows:

- (1) Establishing a Statewide Homelessness Information System Working Group within the Department of Human Services to first assess the feasibility of creating a statewide homelessness information system that could be utilized by various government agencies to provide efficient and effective assistance to individuals experiencing homelessness or at-risk individuals, before establishing the system itself;

- (2) Requiring the working group to report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023;
- (3) Requiring the working group's report to include:
 - (A) An assessment of the forms of statewide homelessness information systems that collect, track, and share data in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to the protection of personal information, and the form of the system most suitable for implementation in Hawaii;
 - (B) A financial feasibility assessment, including a cost-benefit analysis, of establishing and maintaining the statewide homelessness information system; and
 - (C) An assessment of whether funding for the operation of the system should be included in the base budget of the Department of Human Services;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of December 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

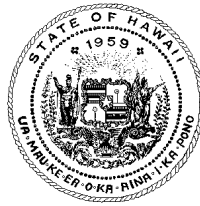
We agree that understanding homeless data is fundamental to strategically addressing homelessness in Hawaii. Other significant priorities that require investment are increasing available low-income housing statewide and predictable funding.

The Department respectfully requests the Legislature consider an amendment that names the legislative members as co-chairs of the work group. With the report date of twenty days prior to the start of next session, and the gubernatorial election, it is unlikely that the Director's office will be able to support the work group sufficiently and provide a report to the Legislature. Further, the Homeless Programs Office (HPO) is not sufficiently staffed to support this additional responsibility. The executive budget includes a request for additional HPO staff.

Alternatively, the Legislature may want to consider a one-time appropriation to contract services to facilitate the group and prepare the report.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



MAX N. OTANI
DIRECTOR

Maria C. Cook
Deputy Director
Administration

Tommy Johnson
Deputy Director
Corrections

Jordan Lowe
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
1177 Alakea Street, 6th Floor
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

No. _____

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2371, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

by
Max N. Otani, Director
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran., Vice Chair

Friday, February 18, 2022; 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) supports the intent of Senate Bill (SB) 2371, Senate Draft (SD) 1, which establishes a Statewide Homelessness Information System Working Group within the Department of Human Services (DHS), to assess the feasibility of creating a statewide homelessness information system as proposed in the original draft of SB 2371, and to provide a comprehensive report of its findings to the 2023 Legislature.

PSD has previously stated its support for a shared information system, and is very willing to participate as a member of the Information System Working Group proposed in SB 2371, SD 1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

SB-2371-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 5:23:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Nikos Leverenz	Testifying for Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center supports SB 2371, SD1.

HHHRC Executive Director Heather Lusk currently serves as Board Chair of Partners in Care Oahu, a planning, coordinating, and advocacy alliance that develops recommendations for programs and services to fill needs within Oahu’s continuum of care for homeless persons. HHHRC provides homeless outreach and housing placement navigation services in urban Honolulu and the Upper Windward Coast, including North Shore.

HHHRC’s mission is to reduce harm, promote health, create wellness, and fight stigma in Hawaii and the Pacific. We work with many individuals impacted by poverty, housing instability, and other social determinants of health. Many have behavioral health problems, including those related to substance use and mental health conditions. Many of our program clients and participants have also been deeply impacted by trauma, including histories of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu's Continuum of Care

Our mission is to eliminate homelessness through open and inclusive participation and the coordination of integrated responses.

COMMENTS ON SB 2371 SD 1 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means,
FROM: Partners In Care (PIC)
Hearing: Friday, February 18th, 2022, 10:00am via videoconference
Position: **Comments**

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Partner In Care, Oahu's Continuum of Care, would like to submit comments on this measure. Data is an integral part of assessing the needs and utilization of services and resources in the homeless service system. It is through the monitoring and evaluation of programs that providers, the community and policy makers can make decisions on the funding, policies and programs available within the community. Partners In Care is the Lead Agency for the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and has worked hard to improve this system over the last several years and make more data analysis available to all stakeholders. Partners In Care takes the integrity of this system seriously and endeavors to protect client level data so that those who receive homeless services and resources trust that their information is not being shared inappropriately.

Partners In Care is committed to making aggregate data available to stakeholders and the community and encourage people to reach out to us to review this information on our website. We are also open to suggestions on other dashboards and reports that we could produce. While the need for a statewide report is understood, we would like any available funding to be placed in services and housing to address homelessness on Oahu and statewide. Both Continuums of Care in Hawaii (PIC and BTG) submit multiple reports throughout the year that helps to inform stakeholders of current trends and data. This includes the Housing Inventory Count (HIC) the Point In Time Count (PITC), reports to the Hawaii Interagency on Homelessness and much more. We work very closely with the Governors Coordinator on Homelessness as well as county representatives from the Mayor's Office on Housing and the Department of Community Services. It is through these relationships that provide guidance to our system.

We appreciate the amendment to this measure to create a working group to further discuss the issue of data within our state. At this time, we do not feel that the creation of a new database is warranted and that there are other ways to pull data in a manner that will meet the needs of all stakeholders. We also request that representatives from the Housing and Urban Development be included in this working group. The majority of funds currently covering the HMIS throughout

Oahu come from HUD along with regulations on use of this funding and the metrics required to come from the database.

Thank you for you're the opportunity to comment on this measure. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Aloha

SB-2371-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2022 9:48:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Daniel Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

The Senate thirty-first Legislature, 2022, State of Hawaii

Daniel Quinn, University of Hawai'i Mānoa Social Work Student

Friday, February 18, 2022

Support for SB 2371, Relating to Homelessness

I am currently in the process of completing my graduate degree in Social Work with the University of Hawai'i Mānoa, but for the past fifteen years I've been working in mental health. For the past three years, most of my work has been with homeless populations. I support SB 2371, Relating to Homelessness, which would establish a statewide homelessness information system.

With advancements in technology, I believe that a system that keeps track of both Hawaii's homeless populations and the resources offered to them is feasible and could be done in a fairly inexpensive way. We can utilize new technologies to improve the accessibility and the ease of registering for services if an individual is becoming or is homeless. We have tools at our disposal, but we have to get creative with the way that we use them.

This past summer, I worked as an intern with the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness. I saw the effectiveness that the government can have in directing needed services and in implementing policy to counteract the risks to homeless populations. I also saw a growing need as well as a restriction in resources for these problems. The government has had success with the limited tools and at their disposal, but I believe that with more significant tools, this problem

could be better addressed. We have resources like vacant housing. We always knew how many vacant beds we had, but, in part due to COVID, there was uncertainty regarding how many people were in need of housing. We could benefit from an organization such as this to allocate and to keep track of housing resources.

The benefits of an organization like this could be substantial. Working to better homeless populations is working to better society as a whole. By serving homeless communities, we could in turn reduce crime. We have the ability to offer people the services they need in times of crisis.

By creating an organization that will establish and track a statewide homeless information system, we can allocate resources to homeless populations, uplifting at-risk groups and society as a whole. I strongly urge the senate to pass SB 2371. Thank you for your time, consideration, and this opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-2371-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2022 2:47:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/18/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
S.DelaCruz	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

SB 2371 will only add more bureaucracy on top of bureaucracy. The issue of homelessness has been completely industrialized by all sectors. Throwing good money after bad, how does this bill differ from the data that exists currently; as collected from Point in Time, Partners In Care and Bridging the Gap.