

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



CHAD K. TANIGUCHI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Statement of
Chad K. Taniguchi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

February 13, 2009 2:20 P.M.
Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
H.B. 1187
RELATING TO THE HOMELESS

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports the intent of H.B. 1187, which provides for a return-to-home program for persons stranded in this State.

While we acknowledge the good intent of this bill, we caution that it may have the unintended effect of increasing the number of homeless persons entering Hawaii, once it is known that a person who gets here on their own will be able to get transportation back home provided by the State. We are concerned that some may misuse this program to take a "free vacation" to Hawaii.

For that reason we recommend that the program be limited to families with minor children who are stranded. Families would be less likely than single individuals to decide to come to Hawaii temporarily, with the intent of getting a free trip back to their home.

NO MORE SHELTERS

A community-based organization dedicated to eliminating policies that create homelessness

Testimony for HB 1187
Friday, Feb 13, 2008 2:20 pm Conference Room 325
JUDtestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov.

Dear Rep. Cabanilla:

In general, as someone who has worked in homeless services for the past 7 years in Hawaii – our organization does NOT support this bill for several reasons:

- 1) There are already sufficient funds (from client's own or other client assistance resources) to help homeless individuals return to the mainland. Assistance people to return to their mainland home already happens when it is deemed appropriate. The only barriers to "sending back" do not want to return. Those that do - find a way and usually have their own money.
- 2) The policy implications and unintended consequences of this bill are many: 1) Will you ban people from traveling back to Hawaii if they have used tax money to return previously to the mainland? 2) Is the legislature willing to allocate \$2,000+ for a whole family, 3) An incentive to come to Hawaii may increase due to the awareness of these "return" funds..
- 3) Considering that massive budget cuts are being put in place - this is not a good time for new "untested programs". HPHA stipend contracts already allow funds to be used for these purposes at the discretion of the agency. But again, the clients usually have it - that is rarely the problem.

I was at the original housing discussion led by Rep. Cabanilla and I understand that she is trying to get creative about the problem and I appreciate it. But this is a policy and funding that may bring a number of unintended consequences and is not needed and should not be considered a priority for funding.

Michael Ullman
Executive Director
Honolulu, HI
(808) 391-7963

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION OF 2009

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Chair: Representative John Riki Karamatsu Vice Chair: Representative Ken Ito
And Members of the Judiciary Committee

DATE: Friday, February 13, 2009
TIME: 2:20 PM
PLACE: Conference Room#325
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i

In Consideration of
H.B. 1187
RELATING TO
HOMELESS: RETURN HOME

My name is Earl Everett and I am one of approximately 182 social work graduate students at the University of Hawaii Mānoa campus. I am testifying in support of HB 1187 relating to Homeless: Return Home; Assist the homeless in reuniting with their family.

HB 1187 serves several purposes. First, HB 1187 will help reunite homeless members in our community who have become stranded in Hawaii with close family members on the mainland. Second, HB 1187 will help alleviate the mounting cost for emergency shelters, medical care, business disruption, crime and incarceration associated with chronic homelessness.

The economic climate in Hawai'i is dire. According to reports provided by Aloha United Way, Hawai'i has roughly 6,000 homeless people. Last year homeless demographics indicated that of those reported they were homeless, 1,215 were children under the age of 12. People who come from the mainland are often unprepared to live here. They come with little to no income, no employment prospects, and no permanent place to stay. They in turn become victims of the homelessness crisis here in Hawai'i. In turn they continue to drain our limited financial resources to insure their health and well being. Often they can be found self-medicating themselves with alcohol and drugs hoping to one day, financially, get back on their feet. Those homeless individuals who originate from the mainland can benefit from a return trip home to the mainland. HB 1187 will have significant implications in helping stranded homeless members reconnect with their families, their communities, and other organizations that will nourish, encourage, assist, enable, and support them. In such an environment their individual potentials can be strengthened while at the same time promoting equity and justice at all levels of society.

I urge you to support HB 1187 relating to Homeless; Return Home. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.