



the
**Drug Policy
Forum**
of hawaii

February 12, 2009

LATE

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To: Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland, Chair
Senator Josh Green, Vice Chair and
Members of the Committee on Human Services

From: Jeanne Y. Ohta, Executive Director

Re: SB 1189 Relating to Drug Testing
Hearing: February 12, 2009, 1:45 p.m., Room 016

Position: STRONG OPPOSITION

I am testifying today in strong opposition to SB 1189 Relating to Drug Testing which requires recipients of general assistance, food stamps, and temporary assistance to submit to drug testing for reasonable suspicion.

This measure is vague, does not define reasonable suspicion and does not indicate who is to determine the reasonable suspicion that requires the recipient to submit to drug testing.

Further, terminating certain benefits for testing positive on a drug test may be against program policies. The Food Stamp program is based on income eligibility and is a federal program.

This measure also does not include a requirement for a drug assessment; nor does it recommend drug treatment. It also does not include provisions to regain benefits once they are terminated. Terminating benefits for a condition defined "as a brain disease" by the National Institute of Drug Abuse without consideration for treatment and other alternatives does not solve any problems, but more than likely creates others.

DPFH suggests that more emphasis be placed on funding residential and out-patient drug treatment programs rather than on drug testing specific groups of Hawai'i residents.