

NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi
Hawaii Public Housing Authority
Before the

LATE TESTIMONY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

February 21, 2012 2:00 P.M.
Room 325, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
House Bill No. 2736
Relating to Promotion of Controlled Substances

Honorable Chair and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary, thank you for the opportunity to provide you with comments regarding House Bill No. 2736, relating to promotion of controlled substances.

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports enactment of this measure which elevates the crime of promotion of controlled substances in, on, or near public housing projects to a Class C felony, with amendments. This measure will significantly improve the ability of the HPHA to ensure a secure, livable community for our residents. Currently, it is already a Class C felony to promote controlled substances in, on, or near public schools and public parks, so this amendment would bring criminal law in line with respect to public housing. HPHA will continue to work with police to refine our policies and procedures to effectively apply the provision, along with other necessary security improvements.

The HPHA respectfully requests that Section 1 of the bill (Section 712-1249.6(7), Hawaii Revised Statutes) be amended as follows:

"(7) For purposes of this section, "public housing project or complex" means a housing project directly controlled, owned, developed, or managed by the Hawaii public housing authority pursuant to the federal **or state** low-rent public housing program."

to ensure the measure benefits HPHA's residents of not only federal, but also state public housing projects.

February 8, 2012

Aloha Representatives,

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My name is Kapiolani Silva and I am a tenant of Puuwai Momi Housing (Halawa) in Aiea. I am writing in support of HB 2736 Relating to the Promotion of Controlled Substances to Include Public Housing Projects and Complexes. I'd like to thank you all for taking the time to hear this much needed matter. The inclusion of Public Housing Projects to the law would be a foot in the right direction in attempting to break the cycle of drug abuse in a highly vulnerable environment.

Knowledge of accessing drugs in my community is common to children as young as 5 years old. In 2006 Puuwai Momi Volunteers for Youth, a parent lead and organized support group for families in the Makalapa Community, held a family event in the park. At this event we had several interactive activities. One of the activities was for the youth to identify areas in their community where they knew there was drug use, by placing a colored dot on the map of the Housing Project and its surrounding area. Needless to say, our map was well colored, and we were amazed at the age ranges and how young they were. I don't mean to sound naïve, we hear about the "at risk" studies and believe them to be true, but having them validated by five year olds drove the point home for those of us assessing the event at the time.

As a parent trying to raise my son the best I can, I can't ignore the fact that he comes into contact with drugs on a daily basis no matter what I do to educate him. It is accessible to him. In my mind, simple tasks like taking out the trash become life threatening because on any given day groups gather and cohort near the receptacle areas and "smoke pakalolo and drink". Including public housings and complexes to the current law would possibly cut off or minimize the availability and access to drugs. I know that my view is not popular with many of my neighbors, but that is why I believe it is necessary. Our children are currently protected by the current law in school and in parks, should they not be protected where they live as well?

It is my understanding that it is a privilege and not a right to be a tenant in a publicly subsidized housing project. I asked for help with rental assistance voluntarily, therefore giving up any right to privacy of self and home when I signed the lease agreement. As a parent and resident of Puuwai Momi Housing I beg of you to pass HB 2736 into law.

Mahalo for your time,

Kapiolani Silva,

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The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the House Committee on Judiciary with the agency's position regarding H.B. No. 2736. We respectfully request the Committee to pass this measure favorably, and we thank you very much for your dedicated support.