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March 29, 2016

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **HB 1773, HD1 SD1, Relating to Housing - Support**
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211, March 29, 2016, 9:35 A.M.

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in support of HB 1773, HD1 SD1, Relating to Housing.

HCAN is committed to improving lives and being a strong voice advocating for Hawai'i's children. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2016 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2016policyagenda>.

HCAN supports this initiative to provide authorization and appropriations for critical programs serving Hawai'i's most at risk families:

- \$2 million for temporary rental (Rapid Re-housing) subsidies for working families;
- \$3 million to expand the State's Housing First Program; and
- Adequate staffing to manage these programs.

We need stable funding sources that address the chronic housing shortage and bridge the economic gap for families to afford safe and secure housing, especially those with young children. Without state investments, we could see our state continue to lead the nation in growing rates for homelessness and unsafe and unstable housing.

Homeless Children: Hawai'i has the highest homeless rate in the nation. It's estimated that one-third of the homeless in Hawai'i are children.

Unstable Housing: Many of our families may not be living on the street or the beach, yet they don't have permanent housing -- they stay with friends and family -- moving frequently.

High cost of housing for families: 60 percent of households with young children in Hawai'i pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

We need better solutions and outcomes for our most vulnerable populations. Let's help our state build a comprehensive affordable housing solution that helps families at every stage to secure stable housing options that help families and keiki in our state build a pathway toward greater economic stability and a healthier thriving community.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee appropriate funds and vote to pass this bill.