



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
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GOVERNOR

February 11, 2016

TO: The Honorable Senator Breene Harimoto, Chair
Senate Committee on Housing

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

SUBJECT: **SB 2570 – RELATING TO THE RAPID RE-HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Hearing: Thursday, February 11, 2016, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225, State Capitol

POSITION: The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness appreciates the intent of this measure, as well as the Legislature's support of Rapid Re-Housing as an evidence-based best practice to end homelessness. The Coordinator notes that the Governor's Executive Budget includes \$2 million for Rapid Re-Housing, and asks for the Legislature's support of the Executive Budget Request. The Coordinator also defers to the Department of Human Services in regards to specific issues relating to implementation of the proposed program. While the Coordinator establishes and coordinates State policy to address homelessness, the Department of Human Services Homeless Programs Office is responsible for the administration and implementation of homeless programs.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the bill is to establish a Rapid Re-Housing program to move homeless families and individuals into permanent housing as quickly as possible and achieve stability in that housing. The bill also requires the program to be designed and operated to qualify for federal emergency shelter grants, and appropriates general funds for fiscal year 2016-2017.

Rapid Re-Housing is an intervention designed to assist homeless individuals and families to quickly transition to permanent housing by providing a short-term housing subsidy. The Rapid Re-Housing program described in the Executive Budget differs from

the one proposed by this bill in that the administration's Rapid Re-Housing program will be specifically targeted at homeless individuals and families residing in shelter, and will be designed to accelerate the transition to permanent housing and reduce the length of stay in shelter. By more rapidly transitioning these households, the administration's Rapid Re-Housing program would enable more vacancies to become available within the shelter system, thereby maximizing the use of existing shelter inventory to better meet the increased number of unsheltered households throughout the state. The \$2 million requested in the Executive Budget is estimated to serve up to 750 households statewide.

The Coordinator notes that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds a similar program labeled Rapid Re-Housing through the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). However, the federal program establishes income limits at 30% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for eligible households. The administration's Rapid Re-Housing program would be designed to target households earning between 31-60% of the AMI in order to complement the existing federal program.

Finally, this measure aligns with Goal 2, Objective 4, Strategy 1 of the Hawaii Interagency Council on Homelessness Strategic Plan to End Homelessness, which is to "support additional rental housing subsidies through federal, state, local and private resources."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.