

JAN 18 2019

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that homelessness is one
2 of the most pressing problems in Hawaii, which requires a
3 robust, comprehensive, long-term solution to address Hawaii's
4 affordable housing and homelessness crisis. One important
5 component of the solution is ensuring that low-income kupuna are
6 not forced into homelessness through a combination of fixed
7 incomes and rapidly rising rents. Therefore, a rent subsidy
8 program targeted toward assisting kupuna in this situation is
9 necessary.

10 Over the last fifty years, the number of cost-burdened
11 renters, those paying more than thirty per cent of their income
12 for rent, has significantly increased. Today, almost half of
13 renters in the State pay more than thirty per cent of their
14 income for rent. High housing costs have driven more and more
15 Hawaii residents into homelessness and now Hawaii has the
16 highest homelessness rate in the nation.



1 The legislature finds that by making smart investments in
2 homelessness and housing, using data-driven practices, and
3 improving coordination, Hawaii has gradually begun to turn the
4 tide in the homelessness crisis. In 2017, Hawaii's homelessness
5 rate went down for the first time in years, a trend that
6 continued in 2018. During the regular session of 2018, the
7 legislature made unprecedented levels of investment in low-
8 income housing and homelessness, appropriating \$200,000,000 for
9 the rental housing revolving fund, \$30,000,000 for ohana zones,
10 and \$13,500,000 for proven-effective and promising homelessness
11 programs.

12 To turn back fifty years of growth in Hawaii's housing and
13 homelessness crisis, investments of this scale must be made
14 consistently in the coming years. Hawaii must prioritize
15 programs that are the most cost-effective and target the most
16 vulnerable populations, such as the State's kupuna. The latest
17 Homeless Service Utilization Report (2017) found that there are
18 1,386 homeless elders in Hawaii. Many more elders face
19 homelessness as rents skyrocket. Due to the fixed incomes of
20 elders, a long-term rental assistance program is needed.



1 The purpose of this Act is to establish the long-term
2 rental assistance pilot program for kupuna.

3 SECTION 2. (a) There is established the long-term rental
4 assistance pilot program to be administered by the department of
5 health. The department of health shall:

6 (1) Provide long-term rental assistance to individuals who
7 are over the age of sixty who are homeless or at
8 imminent risk of becoming homeless;

9 (2) Ensure that individuals participating in the program
10 will not pay more than fifty per cent of their income
11 for rent; and

12 (3) Provide housing counseling and landlord assistance to
13 assist elders in obtaining or retaining permanent
14 housing.

15 (b) The department of health may work with the executive
16 office on aging to merge the long-term rental assistance pilot
17 program with existing programs, if in the opinion of the
18 department of health, it is more efficient to do so.

19 (c) The department of health may establish rules and
20 qualification standards for beneficiaries of the long-term
21 rental assistance pilot program.



1 (d) The department of health shall submit a report of its
 2 findings and recommendations pertaining to the long-term rental
 3 assistance pilot program, including any proposed legislation, to
 4 the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening
 5 of the regular session of 2022.

6 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
 7 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much
 8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 and the
 9 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
 10 2020-2021 for the long-term rental assistance pilot program.

11 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
 12 of health for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.
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INTRODUCED BY:

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S.B. NO. 1031

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S.B. NO. 1031

Report Title:

Kupuna Caucus; Long-Term Rental Assistance Pilot Program;
Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the long-term rental assistance pilot program to be administered by the department of health. Appropriates funds for the administration of the pilot program.

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