

JAN 21 2022

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



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

12           The legislature also finds that, to turn back fifty years  
13 of growth in Hawaii's housing and homelessness crisis,  
14 investments of this scale must be made consistently in the  
15 coming years. Hawaii must prioritize programs that are the most  
16 cost-effective and target the most vulnerable populations, such  
17 as the State's kupuna. The latest Homeless Service Utilization  
18 Report (2017) found that there are 1,386 homeless elders in  
19 Hawaii. Many more elders face homelessness as rents skyrocket.  
20 Due to the fixed incomes of elders, a long-term rental  
21 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 Hawaii public  
5 housing authority. The Hawaii public housing authority may  
6 enter into memoranda of agreement with the counties or  
7 specialized non-profit organizations as necessary to implement  
8 this Act. The Hawaii public housing authority shall:

9           (1) Provide long-term rental assistance to individuals who  
10           are over sixty-two years of age and are homeless or at  
11           imminent risk of becoming homeless;

12           (2) Ensure that individuals participating in the program  
13           will not pay more than fifty per cent of their net  
14           income for rent;

15           (3) Provide housing counseling and landlord assistance to  
16           assist elders in obtaining or retaining permanent  
17           housing; and

18           (4) Coordinate with mental health services to assist  
19           elders in obtaining or retaining permanent housing.

20           (b) The Hawaii public housing authority shall be exempt  
21 from chapter 103D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, in selecting a



1 qualified non-profit organization to administer the long term  
2 rental assistance program for kupuna, and shall, without regard  
3 to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, establish rules and  
4 qualification standards for participants of the long-term rental  
5 assistance pilot program.

6 (c) The Hawaii public housing authority shall require the  
7 long-term rental assistance program participants to participate  
8 in the Continuum of Care's Coordinated Entry System for homeless  
9 services.

10 (d) The Hawaii public housing authority shall submit a  
11 report to the legislature of its findings and recommendations,  
12 including any proposed legislation, regarding the long-term  
13 rental assistance pilot program no later than one month prior to  
14 the convening of the regular sessions of 2023, 2024, 2025, and  
15 2026.

16 (e) The long-term rental assistance pilot program shall  
17 cease to exist on June 30, 2025.

18 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
19 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
20 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for  
21 the long-term rental assistance pilot program, including two



1 full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) public housing specialist  
2 positions within the Hawaii public housing authority.

3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii public  
4 housing authority for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

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INTRODUCED BY:  \_\_\_\_\_



# S.B. NO. 2677

**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 Hawaii Public Housing Authority for individuals over sixty-two years old who are homeless, or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Appropriates funds.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

