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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 the homelessness rate per capita in Hawaii  
17 is among the highest in 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 sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless  
11           or at 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 require the  
21 long-term rental assistance program participants to participate



1 in the Continuum of Care's Coordinated Entry System for homeless  
2 services.

3 (c) The Hawaii public housing authority shall submit a  
4 report to the legislature of its findings and recommendations,  
5 including any proposed legislation, regarding the long-term  
6 rental assistance pilot program no later than one month prior to  
7 the convening of the regular sessions of 2023, 2024, and 2025.

8 (d) The long-term rental assistance pilot program shall  
9 cease to exist on June 30, 2025.

10 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
11 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
12 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for  
13 the long-term rental assistance pilot program, including two  
14 full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) public housing specialist  
15 positions within the Hawaii public housing authority.

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

18 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on December 31,  
19 2050; and shall be repealed on June 30, 2025.



**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 sixty-two years of age or older who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless. Appropriates funds. Repeals 6/30/2025. Effective 12/31/2050. (SD1)

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

