

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16 2024

RE: S.B. No. 2885
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Health and Human Services, to which was referred S.B. No. 2885 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a Homeless Triage Center Program within the Statewide Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions in the Department of Human Services; and
- (2) Make an appropriation.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness; Department of Health; Institute for Human Services, Inc.; Partners in Care; Hawaii Substance Abuse Coalition; and four individuals.

Your Committee finds that, in 2022, the State was ranked fourth in the nation for the highest rates of homelessness. Homeless individuals suffering from behavioral health conditions are often high users of hospital emergency departments, costing the State's health system millions of dollars each year for emergency ambulance transportation and emergency mental health evaluations. This measure would establish a triage center to divert homeless individuals suffering from behavioral health



conditions from hospital emergency departments and the criminal justice system.

Your Committee notes, however, the multiple different systems and programs that exist concerning the State's response to homeless individuals who are suffering from behavioral health conditions. There are operations in place led by the Department of Health, Department of Human Services, and The Judiciary, respectively, that assist individuals dealing with behavioral or mental health issues to various degrees. Accordingly, your Committee finds that, rather than adding more layers that could be counterproductive and creating excessive demands on the limited funding available for multiple different systems, the State would benefit from a coordinated system to address homeless individuals experiencing behavioral health issues and the determination of a cohesive path forward in the State's efforts to assist affected individuals. Amendments to this measure are therefore necessary to address this concern.

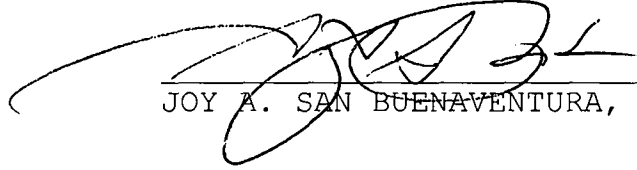
Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting its contents and inserting language to establish a working group within the Statewide Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions in the Department of Human Services to develop a triage center program that focuses on serving homeless individuals with substance abuse issues or mental illness;
- (2) Amending section 1 to reflect its amended purpose; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Health and Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2885, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2885, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Health and Human
Services,



JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, Chair



