

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELawe KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

March 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
House Committee on Health & Homelessness

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **HCR 141/ HR 123 – RESOLVING TO END HOMELESSNESS ON MAUI.**

Hearing: March 27, 2024, 11:10 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol & Video Conference

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the Legislature's attention to the housing needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness Statewide and the focus on the critical housing needs of Maui residents following the August 8 wildfires.

We support increasing affordable and low-income housing inventory across the State, including efforts by the State Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to implement Ohana Zone Pilot Programs and Kauhale sites and the Hawaii Public Housing Authority's (HPHA) efforts to redevelop and upgrade its properties, including the HPHA properties destroyed in the August 8 wildfires.

DHS is also leading the Governor's initiative Ka La'i Ola to construct 450 modular units on State land under the control of the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) FDC at Leiali'i. This site was identified after community engagement and hearing community members' sentiments that were against the building at Launiupoko. Site work on Ka La'i Ola is scheduled to begin in April 2024.

Additional sites were examined in West and Central Maui. Each site poses unique challenges that make Leiali'i the best option. Notably, the infrastructure improvement will be permanent and intended to be used by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for future beneficiary development.

Regarding support services for wildfire survivors, DHS is the lead agency of the Disaster Case Management program, which launched on February 21, 2024. The program aims to assist every survivor with an individual recovery plan.

Notably, DHS requests the Legislature's support for executive budget requests for the Maui wildfire recovery and also increases funds available for statewide contracted services procured by the Homeless Programs Office. The Department's budget request to support DHS emergency management efforts on Maui will allow DHS to have additional human and IT resources necessary to oversee recovery efforts and assist in providing concrete needs to Maui survivors who are not eligible for federal disaster assistance.

The budget request for the Homeless Programs Office to increase funds for statewide contracted services is to help providers meet some of the increasing costs of providing services, including statutory increases to the minimum wage. These contract amounts have not increased since 2016, and the high turnover of outreach and shelter staff reduces the effectiveness of those services. Individuals and families experiencing homelessness, who may also be suffering from mental health or substance abuse disorders, need frequent engagement to develop rapport and trust to return to housing. The lack of staff capacity and continuity leads to multiple cascading impacts that lengthen peoples' unsheltered experiences and increase their vulnerabilities, and also impact public and private landowners where encampments become more entrenched.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this resolution.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore  
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

March 26, 2024

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair, and  
Members of the Health & Homelessness Committee

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 27, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR141  
AND HR123, RESOLVING TO END HOMELESSNESS ON MAUI**

I **support** these resolutions that aim to resolve homelessness and house displaced wildfire victims on Maui.

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support these resolutions for the following reasons:

1. The August 2023 wildfires exacerbated West Maui's longstanding homelessness problem.
2. A 2018 Hawaii Appleseed for Law and Economic Justice cost-benefit analysis found that an investment of \$726 million over ten years to provide housing to those experiencing chronic homelessness would save over \$2 billion in healthcare and other costs.
3. Studies have shown that housing those without shelter leads to lower rates of arrests and incarceration, saving taxpayer money.

Thank you for your consideration.

ocs:proj:legis:24legis:24testimony:hcr141\_hr123\_paf24-002(106)\_jpp

Dear Committee,

Maui homeless efforts should be focused on medical & public safety solutions, such as copying the structure of homeless efforts from County of Honolulu.

Blessings,

Angela Melody Young

Kapalama Neighborhood Security Watch

**HCR-141**

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 7:24:35 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/27/2024 11:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support HCR141. Homelessness in Hawaii is ridiculously high because we are a destination that everyone has heard of and the weather will not kill them except for colds. But government has to change their perspective, not top down but the people then up. What does the people born and raised in this state need? Why are we taking the opinions of outsiders on valuing our own lands and developers or huge organizations and other leaders who just want to profit from the poor and search of their American Dream!

I traveled across the continent from California to Maine and down to Florida and across again for 4 months before the pandemic in 2018-19. I saw how winters are so bad with ice and snow and no one cared about the homeless. I wrote to Governor Ige and then Lt. Gov Green telling my view, that Hawaii doesn't have a homelessness problem it's the continent! Hawaii is also known for the aloha spirit worldwide, unlike how you would be treated in other places, especially New York.

In Maui, after the Lahaina Wildfires, media coverage was untrue. Many local families lost their families and their generational homes, including myself with my mother being raised in Lahaina and we visited almost annually there to visit my grandparents. But media only visitors at the Kaanapali Maui hotels that were paid ridiculous prices to retain them, when they would have rather lived here and live off of our state economy. Most of those missing were being reported from families from the continent, who hadn't heard from their relatives in decades, but last said they were in Lahaina, our most beautiful city that Kamehameha I chose as his capital.

Media showed Locals angry and needing help, but the real help was not getting to them. Even supplies had to be stored on Oahu and Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke had to step in but were still blocked from those that needed assistance. Even I tried to assist at the Hawaii Convention Center, but no one was needed for the less than 100 people who came to Oahu. I was there the 2nd day and only 1 woman with her dog showed up and there was no one upstairs since everybody had already been placed or sent back to the continent. American Red Cross already had their volunteers and dozens were being turned away, although media kept saying to contact them. I sat there most of the day trying to help a staff person who was pulled from the kitchen to assist at the welcoming desk, but security chased me away for assisting with angry people who wanted to drop off their goods there and not at Good Will or the Capitol. A better reporting system is needed for our islands!

Support HCR141 for all islands!



**HCR-141**

Submitted on: 3/26/2024 7:24:10 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/27/2024 11:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joe Ritter	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Acting Chair Takenouchi, Chair Belatti

Thank you for hearing this resolution on Homelessness.

Per Representative Amato For HCR 141/ HR 123 I respectfully submit are a few non-sunstantive minor technical grammatical and capitalization amendments:

- P1 line 5 change Hawaii to Hawai'i
- P2 line 2 change Hawai'ians to Hawaiians
- P2 line 13 change Hawaii to Hawai'i
- P2 line 17 change request the Governor to request of the Governor
- P2 line 22 change request the Governor to we request of the Governor
- P2 line 34 change housing housing to housing
- P2 line 42 change the Honorable to The Honorable

Thank you Jenna for hearing this important measure that will help the people of Maui.

Dr. Joe Ritter for Representative Terez Amato

Terez



**Representative Amato**

Representing South Maui:

House District 11, (Kihei, Wailea Makena)





**HCR-141**

Submitted on: 3/23/2024 10:43:10 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/27/2024 11:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristi Desaucido	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Support of Building Homes for Displaced Victims of the Lahaina Wildfires

Honorable Members and Leaders,

I write to express my full support for the proposed resolution urging the Governor and his Coordinator on Homelessness and Housing Solutions to take immediate action in response to the devastating Lahaina wildfires. The tragedy has left many individuals and families displaced, intensifying the urgent need for stable and secure housing on Maui.

Securing a location and building at least 450 homes for the wildfire victims is a necessary step towards recovery and rebuilding lives. Additionally, establishing Kauhale for the displaced, including those who were homeless before the wildfires, is critical. These communities should not only provide shelter but also access to essential services such as mental health support and social services, ensuring a holistic approach to recovery and rehabilitation.

The estimated 800 homeless individuals on Maui represent a broader issue of housing insecurity that requires compassionate and immediate action. By constructing new housing units and providing comprehensive support services, we can make significant strides towards addressing this crisis.

I urge the State and all involved parties to proceed with compassion and aloha, embodying the spirit of community and shared responsibility. Let us come together to provide shelter, support, and a path forward for all those affected by the wildfires and the ongoing homelessness crisis.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,  
Kristi Desuacido

**HCR-141**

Submitted on: 3/21/2024 2:54:01 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/27/2024 11:10:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edward Codelia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I disagree with this legislatures recommendation that the state build these facilities on the island of Maui. I applaud the States current attention to this growing population I appreciate the State's acceptance of responsibility for this population. The only change I request is the land be on the island of Oahu

Maui can not afford to have a population of this size being cared for while planning, and rebuilding the west side of Maui. Oahu is better equipped to absorb the balance of the fire victims and the recorded homeless population prior to August 8, 2023. Creating an open door for 800 units on Maui is just not feasible for this resident to accept at this time.

FROM FEMA: Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) has become an integral part of many community efforts to protect particularly vulnerable people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis. Background NCS has been instrumental in preventing virus infection among older adults experiencing homelessness and other people whose age or underlying health conditions put them at higher risk for dangerous complications from COVID-19. Many communities have complemented these NCS facilities with Alternative Care Sites (ACS) that isolate and quarantine people who are COVID-positive, have been exposed to a COVID-positive person, or have COVID-like symptoms and are awaiting test results. Hotels, motels, dormitories, and medical respite/recuperative care facilities have all functioned as sites for both NCS and ACS facilities. Rehousing residents directly out of NCS and similar facilities, which will reduce client exposure to the coronavirus, should be central to planning and implementing broader rehousing strategies.

Oahu has shown that they are prepared and able to lead the way with NCS Housing as several successful communities have been created.

Thanks for the consideration.