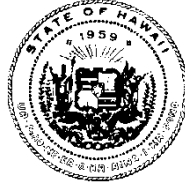


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



DEAN MINAKAMI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of
DEAN MINAKAMI
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation
Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 26, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 325

In consideration of
H.B. 1325 HD2
RELATING TO HOUSING.

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** HB 1325 HD2, which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under HHFDC to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project by: granting those tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project at an affordable rate; establishing a fund to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance; providing information, either directly or through a contracted service, on how to obtain assistance and exercise the right of first refusal; establishing procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants, and establish consequences for a developer's noncompliance.

HHFDC typically requires developers to provide relocation assistance if their project causes displacement, and this bill establishes a standard that all projects must meet.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 10:31:25 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nadine Ortega	Tagnawa	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Honorable Members,

Please **pass** H.B. 1325 H.D. 2.

Tagnawa was the first organization to provide Ilokano and Tagalog translations and. culturally sensitive resource navigation to survivors in the immediate aftermath of the 2023 Lahaina fire, and went on to conduct the largest needs assessment post-disaster of the Lahaina Filipino community to date. For your consideration, our study revealed that the top priority identified by Filipino survivors in the rebuilding was Lahaina lands in Lahaina hands–tied with job creation. Additionally, housing instability remains a pervasive issue, with many Filipino tenants uncertain about long-term housing (38%), waiting for lottery results for affordable housing (33%), facing imminent expiration of housing contracts in February 2025, and dependent on temporary support from FEMA and other agencies.

Tagnawa is also an **explicitly Filipino feminist disaster recovery organization** that pays special focus to the disaster risks and vulnerabilities of women, who have less financial ability to secure housing than men due to the gender pay gap, pregnancy penalty, and unfair caregiving responsibilities.

H.B. 1325 H.D. 2 would help address these community concerns and protect Filipino survivors from permanent displacement. Accordingly, we ask that the Committee pass this crucial measure.

Thank you for your support of the Lahaina recovery and affordable housing access Hawai'i-wide.

Nadine Ortega, J.D.

Executive Director



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1325 HD2, RELATING TO HOUSING

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 26, 2025

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB1325 HD2, RELATING TO HOUSING. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports policies that preserve housing for residents, including the expansion of rental assistance programs and tenant protections.

In the process of developing or redeveloping affordable housing projects under the Hawaii Housing Finance & Development Corporation, existing tenants can be evicted or displaced. When that happens, tenants must have rights and protections in place to ensure that they remain housed or can relocate to new housing with as little disruption as possible in the lives of tenants and their families. The stability and community that housing brings must not be taken lightly. The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports public resources going towards meaningfully addressing the uncertainty that displaced/evicted tenants might have to face.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in Support of HB1325 HD2, RELATING TO HOUSING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 1325 HD2 – Relating to Housing
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 2:00 PM Conf. Rm. 325 and via Videoconference

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB1325 HD2**, which establishes a method of stabilizing residents who may be displaced by new 201H projects which may cause the displacement of residents. This thoughtful legislation creates a framework that addresses both our urgent need for new affordable housing, addresses community concern of new developments, while protecting our existing communities and their residents.

One of the primary concerns raised by community members about new housing development is the displacement of current residents and the disruption of established neighborhood bonds. This bill directly addresses these valid concerns by creating a clear process for displaced residents to return to their communities once development is complete. By guaranteeing residents the right of first refusal for comparable units at affordable rates, the bill ensures that new development serves both current and future residents of our communities.

The bill's provisions for relocation assistance and ongoing communication demonstrate a commitment to treating displaced residents with dignity and respect throughout the development process. The requirement to establish a fund providing at least three months' worth of relocation benefits will help ease the financial burden of temporary displacement, while the mandated communication procedures will help residents stay informed and connected to their community during the transition.

These protective measures transform what could be a traumatic displacement into a structured, supported transition with a clear path back to the community. **This approach helps build trust between developers and residents, potentially reducing opposition to much-needed housing development projects.**

Moreover, research from UCLA Lewis Center conducted a study on common rhetoric in opposition to new development and found that often the argument is distilled down to opposition to the developers themselves, not necessarily the development¹. Despite evidence to the contrary that new development actually slows the increase of housing cost in the area at scale and lowers displacement through providing more housing options², the feeling of change and actual displacement can lead to larger neighborhood opposition to new developments. This

1

<https://www-tandfonline-com.eres.library.manoa.hawaii.edu/doi/full/10.1080/07352166.2019.1623684#d1e127>

² <https://escholarship.org/content/qt7bx938fx/qt7bx938fx.pdf>



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for HB 1325 HD2 – Relating to Housing
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Wednesday, February 26, 2025 at 2:00 PM Conf. Rm. 325 and via Videoconference

legislation builds on a model for redevelopment that acknowledges the human impact of housing construction while still moving forward with crucial affordable housing projects. By ensuring that current residents have the option to return to these new developments, we can build more housing while preserving the social fabric that makes our neighborhoods strong and resilient.

HB1325 HD2 addresses both our critical need for more affordable housing and our obligation to protect vulnerable residents who might otherwise be displaced without support or recourse. It represents a thoughtful solution that allows us to grow our housing supply while maintaining the stability and cohesion of our existing communities.

We urge you to support this important legislation that will help us build a more inclusive and equitable housing future for Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Support for HB1325

Aloha e Senators, Chair, Vice Chair:

We are testifying on behalf of Locals In My Backyard (LIMBY) Hawai'i. LIMBY Hawai'i is a hui of concerned kama'āina and kānaka working to help develop solutions to our state's housing crisis.

We are concerned that NIMBYism has driven up costs and driven our friends and families out by opposing all development. We are equally concerned that the apparent answer to this, YIMBYism, insists that anything resembling true affordability is impossible so instead they promote building housing that gets bought by overseas investors. ***We know we won't solve our housing woes without building more, but we won't solve them by simply building more.***

The true solution is to create a housing market for locals: one that houses locals first, is tied to local wages, and is managed in trust. We detail real solutions to our housing woes on our website and through our newsletter.

The future for kama'āina and kānaka will be LIMBY or Las Vegas.

HB1325 is an important part of that process. It should not be the case that in producing housing for those making 140% of AMI we displace those making 80% of AMI. This however, is increasingly the case with 201-H projects.

Kuilei Place should serve as an educational example as hundreds of tenants were displaced to build a tower where the *cheapest* rent in the to be constructed building far exceeded the most *expensive rent in the building to be demolished*.

Relocation assistance should be the norm and we urge members to require it.

Makana Hicks-Goo,
Organizer on behalf of LIMBY Hawaii

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 4:36:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doris Matsunaga	Save Medicaid Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Save Medicaid Hawaii supports HB1325 HD2



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**
Before the House Committee on
Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

In Consideration of House Bill No. 1325 HD2
RELATING TO HOUSING

To Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and the honorable members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 35,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lahaina Strong, stands in **full support of House Bill 1325 HD2**, which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under HHFDC to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project. This bill is a critical measure to prevent displacement and protect our community. Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out, replacing affordable homes with projects that no longer serve the people who need them most. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

By requiring developers to offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance, this bill creates essential safeguards for renters. It also holds developers accountable by ensuring they maintain communication with tenants throughout the process. These protections are especially crucial now, as many of our families are still struggling to find stable housing.

We respectfully urge the **support of House Bill 1325 HD2** to strengthen protections for tenants so that rebuilding truly serves the people who call Hawai'i home.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lahaina Strong

**Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1325 HD2 Relating to Housing

Aloha e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1325 House Draft 2 (HB1325 HD2), which requires developers developing an affordable housing project under HHFDC to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by the proposed project by: granting those tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project at an affordable rate or establishing a fund to provide relocation benefits and offer assistance; providing information, either directly or through a contracted service, on how to obtain assistance and exercise the right of first refusal; and establishing procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants. Establishes consequences for a developer's noncompliance.

HB1325 HD2 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii's affordable housing crisis has led to unintended tenant displacement from rental properties marked for redevelopment. Many residents face instability due to rising rents and redevelopment, losing their homes, social networks, and economic security. Studies show frequent moves harm children's education, behavior, and well-being. While increasing affordable housing is essential, preventing unnecessary displacement is equally important.

This bill requires developers of state- or federally-funded affordable housing projects to offer displaced tenants the right of first refusal for a comparable unit at an affordable rate or establish a relocation fund for financial assistance. Developers must also provide relocation guidance and maintain communication with tenants. Noncompliance could result in funding delays, halted relocation, or disqualification from state housing programs. The Chamber supports this bill as it ensures responsible redevelopment, balances housing expansion with tenant protections, and strengthens community stability and long-term housing security.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1325 HD2. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1325 HD2: Relating to Housing

February 25, 2025

To: Representative Tarnas (Chair), Representative Poepoe (Vice Chair) and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

From: Joni N. Chun, Executive Director, Susannah Wesley Community Center

Hearing: 2:00PM, Wednesday, February 26, 2025, Conf Rm 325

My name is Joni Chun, Executive Director of the Susannah Wesley Community Center. I strongly support HB 1325 HD2 to prevent long-time residents from being displaced by redevelopment projects that should serve, not displace, the very communities they impact.

Families who have lived in their neighborhoods for generations are forced out without a clear path to return. Residents of KPT low-rise have faced inadequate relocation assistance, and we must ensure others—like those at Mayor Wright—don't experience the same hardship. HB 1325 strengthens protections by requiring:

1. **The Right to Return** - Developers benefiting from LIHTC and RHRF subsidies must honor their promise to allow displaced residents to move back.
2. **Individualized Relocation Counseling** - Tenants need real support in finding and securing comparable housing, not just assistance with move-out logistics.

If developers receive tax breaks, subsidies, and zoning exemptions, they must be held accountable to the communities they impact. This bill ensures affordable housing projects truly serve those most in need, including families affected by disasters, without forcing them out permanently.

I urge you to pass HB 1325 and protect Hawai'i's long-time residents. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Adult Friends for Youth

"Redirecting lives to stop Violence"

PRESIDENT AND CEO

*Deborah L.K. Spencer-Chun,
M.S.W.*

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**Past Chair of the Board*

Testimony on HB1325 HD2

Submitted to: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Representative David Tarnas, Chair
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

From: Debbie Spencer-Chun, President and CEO of Adult Friends for Youth (AFY).

In support of HB1325 HD2.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to testify. My testimony is based on my conversations with residents and my meetings with other community organizations, government staff and leaders, and concerned citizens.

When I met with residents back in December regarding the new redevelopment of Kuhio Park Terrace, there were many concerns, such as:

1. There was a lack of communication and/or miscommunication between them and the developer, Hawaii Housing Public Authority, and Seneca, the contracted company to help them relocate. They were getting different information from different sources. This lack of communication and/or miscommunication caused confusion, apprehension, a lack of trust, and, in some cases, anxiety.
 - We need to have a better mechanism to help these residents relocate.
2. The lack of communication or reassurance that they will have the right or opportunity to return.
 - We need a better mechanism to help these residents understand their legal and moral rights to return to the new redevelopment upon completion. They need reassurance, especially our kupuna. (Note: Maintaining contact via a website is not the answer. I don't know about you, but at AFY, we sometimes have a hard time keeping our website updated to provide the most accurate information daily. How or who will keep this website updated accurately daily for these residents to get information? It's possible that it will not happen.)
3. The disruption of their children's education, especially if they must move out of the district.
 - We need a point of contact from the DOE to work directly with these impacted families. (Note: I know this is a housing issue, but it impacts various facets of the residents' lives.)

4. Safety concerns.

- We need to have a mechanism in place that is knowledgeable of various aspects of the residents' concerns. It is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

(Note: I know it is easy to just say to place them in different public housing in the same or other communities, but it is not that simple. There is a history between public housing complexes that could potentially be dangerous. Again, I know this is a housing issue, but we need to consider these things.)

Other comments: Other public housing projects will be redeveloped very soon, and we hope to prevent these situations from reoccurring. We have a large homeless problem in Hawaii, and if we don't get this right, I worry that others will fall into this category. I also agree with some of the other testimonies already submitted.

Mahalo for your time. I appreciate you allowing me to share my mana'o.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Spencer-Chun

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 11:52:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Kay	Maui Tenants and Workers Assn.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is really important, especially in Hawai‘i that low income housing projects/developers protect displaced residents because it is not possible for them to find anything near affordable outside of the rent subsidized units. Displaced residents need to be given first right of refusal when units are built/rennovated.



Parents And Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1325 HD2 RELATING TO HOUSING

TO: Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, & Members,
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
FROM: Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs
DATE: February 26, 2025 at 2:00 PM

Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1325 HD 2, which assists certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction due to the development of affordable housing projects.

PACT's origins are in public housing. We were founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968 and have had a home-base there ever since. Currently we have programs based at KPT, including our Family and Economic Opportunities Centers, Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms and offices, and our Tenacious, Rooted Youth Center (formerly known as the Teen Center). We also have a Youth Center at Pu'uwai Momi Public Housing in Halawa. These roots in public housing and our relationship with families over the years are key to PACT's values and identity as an organization.

Through these programs we provide direct services and partner with families to connect them with support for their health, safety, and economic stability. Displacement and relocation without intensive support disconnects people from critical services such as healthcare, childcare, and the school environments they are familiar with. It's important to us that the community we have been nurtured in is similarly treated with respect and dignity as their legal rights are protected. Residents forced to relocate during development or redevelopment must retain their access to services and schools, so their healthcare, social services and education are not interrupted.

Over the years, PACT has developed into a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 15,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact me at (808) 847-3285 or tkajimura@pacthawaii.org if you have any questions.



HB1325 HD2 RELATING TO HOUSING

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Feb. 26, 2:00pm, Room 325

Aloha mai e Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and members of the Committee:

The Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i provides free, direct legal services to patients in community health settings. Many of our clients are low-income tenants and tenants in public housing projects. We testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** for **HB1325 HD2**, which enacts much needed protections for local families.

Currently, there are almost no clear and enforceable state level displacement protections for tenants in projects that are being re-developed under state funded government schemes by private entities. Public Housing tenants, representing our most low-income and needy families at 30% AMI who are displaced to make way for "new" affordable housing redevelopment by private developers are left to cite [promises made in funding documents](#) and hope that they can return to their community. This has been made abundantly clear in the redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace low-rise, where a private developer is implementing a \$200M+ project that will displace hundreds of current tenants -- tenants who are weeks away from being forced to move, and many of whom have no clear options for housing despite assurances that they would receive relocation assistance and the right to return.¹

Other jurisdictions, such as the State of Georgia's Department of Community Affairs, equivalent to our HHFDC, provides clear relocation plans, engagement, and assistance to ensure their most needy state residents are not left beyond by new 'affordable housing' developments². Most importantly, they have clear enforceable penalties for developers who do not provide the assistance. This bill is modeled after Georgia: providing clear accountability for private developers who benefit from private funds to provide relocation assistance and the right to return.

As our state moves to implement and build affordable housing – increasingly through public-private partnerships similar to the privatization and redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace low-rise – new laws must be enacted to protect displacement of local tenant families. **Without HB1325 HD2, our displaced local families are forced to compete just to return to a community they lived in for generations.** HB1325 HD2 is needed to make clear that developers receiving state government subsidies must take the time to ensure that displaced families receive services, and a clear and operationalized right to return to the project in their community first.

¹ Dillon Ancheta, “**‘Help us’: Public housing redevelopment forces 60 Kalihi tenants to relocate,**” available at <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/01/24/public-housing-redevelopment-forces-60-kalihi-tenants-relocate/>

² See Georgia Department of Community Affairs available at: <https://dca.georgia.gov/affordable-housing/housing-development/housing-tax-credit-program/qualified-allocation-plans-and-12>



Medical-Legal Partnership
for Children in Hawai'i

Accordingly I respectfully ask that you **PASS HB1325 HD2** and provide much needed accountability to private developers who use government funds, subsidies, and relaxed rules under 201h to provide relocation support similar to what is required in other jurisdictions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Deja Ostrowski, Esq.
Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i
808-728-0004; dejao@hawaii.edu



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

February 26, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SUPPORT for HB 1325 HD2 - RELATING TO HOUSING

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 1325 HD2** which would require assistance to tenants who are displaced by an affordable housing project. Our housing shortage is severe and will require us to redevelop many existing residential areas into more dense residential uses. However, in the process of redeveloping existing homes, we must ensure that those who currently live there are treated fairly, equitably and are allowed the opportunity to return to their community.

We believe in increasing housing stability. This involves protecting existing tenants from displacement and minimizing the effects when their home is redeveloped into more housing. We support the main points of this bill: (1) To give displaced tenants the right of first refusal and to return to a comparable unit at an affordable rate or provide relocation assistance to those displaced; (2) Ensure adequate education and communication about the existing tenant's rights during this process and the progress of the redevelopment.

To emphasize, existing tenants should be offered the right of first refusal to a comparable unit in the new development. Every effort should be made to ensure the existing resident is offered the opportunity to return and can afford to do so.

Whatever the mechanism that ensures the existing tenant is able to afford to return, it is especially important that an existing tenant is never put in the position where they return to a comparable unit and will pay more than 30% of their income.



Hawai'i YIMBY

Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.org

info@hawaiiyimby.org

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Damien Waikoloa

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY



**Testimony in support of HB1325 Relating to Housing
By Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services
Before the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
02/26/2025**

Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services strongly supports HB1325 HD2 Relating to Housing. This bill will help ensure that local families who have lived in an area for generations are not displaced to make way for 'new affordable housing' development.

HB1325 HD2 will ensure that all tenants get comprehensive relocation assistance and the choice to move back to the communities, where many have lived, worked and established ties for generations. KPT low-rise residents have asked for the following to be explicitly required by law:

- The right to return to the project, as promised by the developer when the developer was approved for LIHTC and RHRF subsidies [from HHFDC](#) (see link)
- Individualized relocation counseling, which provides tenants assistance with locating and leasing comparable housing and which follows tenants for the life of the redevelopment project, to maximize their likelihood of returning.

KPT low-rise tenants want to make sure no one in Mayor Wright or other redevelopment projects face [the same struggles they are having](#) (see link). Requiring developers to offer displaced community members the right to return ensures that affordable housing projects actually serve those most in need, especially our **local** families struggling in one of the most challenging economic and housing environments in the country.

We thank the Committee in advance for their strong support of this urgent and essential measure!



David Derauf, MD, MPH
Executive Director

On behalf of Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:07:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Tanaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1325 HD2, which will help to prevent the redevelopment of affordable housing projects from displacing and potentially rendering houseless those who these projects are intended to help.

Currently, there is a need for specific and enforceable protections for public housing tenants who are displaced to make way for "new" affordable housing redevelopment by private developers. This has been made abundantly clear in the redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace, where a private developer is implementing a \$200M+ project that will displace dozens of current tenants -- tenants who are now a month away from being forced to move, and many of whom have no clear options for housing despite assurances that they would receive comprehensive relocation assistance.

Many of these working families are facing extreme housing uncertainty, and may even soon be rendered houseless - while the private developer that is displacing them receives millions in taxpayer dollars and entitlements.

Countless more individuals and families may similarly be displaced in future projects if we do not enact proactive protections such as the clear and comprehensive relocation assistance requirements found in this measure.

Accordingly I respectfully ask that you PASS HB1325 HD2.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:50:36 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doneileen Willets	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee members,

My name is Doneileen Willets and I'm a resident of Kuhio Homes. We need to be a little bit more honest about what's been laid out and what's actually occurring. Families of 5 to 6 are being split apart into two separate units, grandparents who cannot depend on themselves are forced to live in a one bedroom unit on their own. Downsizing tenants into a smaller unit goes against the Fair Housing Act specifically against Familial Status along with Chapter 521 of Hawaii Revised Statutes where nuances permits promoting clarity and comprehension. It is draining, rising anxiety, and deteriorating our physical and mental health and well being. We the tenants are the epitome of Kalihi which businesses, schools and organizations thrive. I urge you to please support this bill.

Thank you

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 7:56:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Missy Sione	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Missy Sione and I am a current resident of Kuhio Homes, I strongly support bill HB 1325 and speak not only on my behalf but on behalf of my Father Fa'atafe Sione. We are not being treated fairly, we don't agree with the places the project office is offering, they don't want to help us find a suitable, decent, accommodating place. My Father is disabled and I'm his power of attorney, it feels like I'm close to being displaced because Seneca cannot find us a sustainable one floor 4 bedroom unit which I currently live. We want to stay in the homes we already have, I've lived here most of my entire life and moving elsewhere will change our life drastically.

Thank you

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 8:04:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:26:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kiana Otsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am an O‘ahu resident writing in **strong support of HB1325 HD2**, which would establish a method of stabilizing residents who may be displaced by new 201H projects which may cause the displacement of residents.

I support this bill because it would create a clear process for displaced residents to return to their communities once development is complete. By guaranteeing residents the right of first refusal for comparable units at affordable rates, the bill ensures that new development serves both current and future residents of our communities.

The bill's provisions for relocation assistance and ongoing communication demonstrate a commitment to treating displaced residents with dignity and respect throughout the development process. The requirement to establish a fund providing at least three months' worth of relocation benefits will help ease the financial burden of temporary displacement, while the mandated communication procedures will help residents stay informed and connected to their community during the transition.

Hawai‘i’s rental market has reached a critical tipping point, with costs spiraling beyond what working families can afford, ranking 4th most expensive state for renters in the nation. The combination of limited affordable housing supply, stagnant wages, and minimal tenant protections has created a perfect storm that threatens the stability of our communities.

Those most vulnerable in our current system include the 56% of renters who spend more than 30% of their income on rent, single mothers with children (the demographic most often evicted), kūpuna on fixed social security income, and households with high healthcare, childcare, and foodcare costs.

Please pass this bill to create a framework that addresses both our urgent need for new affordable housing, address community concerns of new developments, while protecting our existing communities and their residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:26:02 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stacey Alapai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please Support HB 1325 and the right of return for displaced tenants. I understand that sometimes renters need to be displaced for repairs or redevelopment. However, this is too often used as a tactic to evict tenants who have affordable rents so the landlord can raise prices.

Relocation assistance and right of return laws like this would help mitigate the negative outcomes for these people being displaced.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:25:33 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julianna Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee,

I urge you to pass HB 1325 because affordable housing projects so often disregard the tenants and communities already living there. This bill would importantly ensure that these affordable housing projects don't disrupt the lives of those they are meant to support.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Julianna Davis

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:47:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie Nogaro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 1325 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Jessie Nogaro

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:57:02 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Lomeli	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 1325 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Kathy Lomeli

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 2:59:14 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheylah	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support of House Bill 1325 HD2**, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your **support for HB1325 HD2** to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Cheylah-Marie Uyeda

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:23:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Surace	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 1325 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Deborah Surace

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 3:34:54 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorena Martinez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 1325 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Lorena Martinez (W. Maui Resident)

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 4:19:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laura Pokipala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The current redevelopment process of the first Phase of Kuhio Park Low-rise has been traumatic, stressful, ineffecient and ineffective for the residents, and they have no guarantee that they will have the first option to return to the new building once it is completed.

This is not how we should treat anyone in the name of developing affordable housing. Please make sure we do better as a State that nurtures its residents.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:05:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Flores	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in full support of HB1325 HD2.

Mahalo

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:49:59 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gina Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Concerned renter,

Gina Jones

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:56:13 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Malone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I believe this bill will protect local residents In the long-term, Ensuring that developers do not solely benefit as Lahaina gets rebuilt.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 6:10:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Otto Zaa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Representatives:

I'm in strong support of HB1325. Our state needs a multifaceted approach to protect and house our local families, especially our vulnerable communities.

Thank you,

Christine Otto Zaa

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:53:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Keahi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 1325 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support of House Bill 1325 HD2**, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your **support for HB1325 HD2** to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Christine Keahi

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:34:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
dale chappell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support of House Bill 1325 HD2**, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your **support for HB1325 HD2** to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your commitment!

Dale Ann Chappell

43 yr resident of Maui

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:41:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ravi Bugga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support of House Bill 1325 HD2**, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your **support for HB1325 HD2** to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Ravi Bugga

Lahaina

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:30:06 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe and Committee Members,

I hope you are well. My name is Molly Mamaril and I am writing in support of HB1325 relating to the Right of Return for Displaced Tenants. This bill will help keep our residents housed by:

- ensuring that displaced tenants can return to redeveloped affordable housing
- preventing sudden displacement which can lead to long term adverse impacts to health, education and finances
- providing relocation assistance with at least 3 months' benefits to ease financial burdens if not able to return
- balancing new development with community stability

Mahalo for your consideration,

Molly Mamaril

Kaimuki resident

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:58:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerald Tariao Montano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am Gerald Montano. I am a pediatrician and a resident from Maui.

I am writing **in support** of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

Housing is major determinant of health. As a pediatrician taking care of the keiki on Maui, I see first hand that the lack of housing can impact physical health (like keeping asthma under control), mental health (lack of housing is associated with depression and anxiety), and school success. **This is not only an economic and justice issue, it is also a public health issue.**

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Gerald Montano, DO

Kahului, HI

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 6:39:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Mavis Oliveira-Medeiros

(808)866-7409

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:24:27 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
cheryl hendrickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 7:45:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
pahnelopi mckenzie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for House Bill 1325 HD2

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **support of House Bill 1325 HD2**, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your **support for HB1325 HD2** to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Pahnelopi McKenzie

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:43:24 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nalani	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Nalani A from Lahaina

Dina Shek
Honolulu, HI 96822

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 26, 2025 at 2:00 PM (Room 325)

Re: SUPPORT for HB 1325 HD 2, Relating to Housing

Dear Committee Members,

I offer this testimony in strong support of HB 1325 HD 2 which prevents further displacement of low-income residents impacted by affordable housing redevelopment. In my professional work as the Legal Director of the Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai‘i, I have seen the redevelopment of low-income and public housing result in the permanent uprooting of tight-knit local communities, with longtime resident families left to face further housing instability. This frequently occurs despite developers promising the “right to return” and relocation services.

As recently highlighted in stories by [Hawaii News Now](#)¹ and [Honolulu Star-Advertiser](#)², sixty Kūhiō Park Terrace (KPT) Low-Rise units are set to be demolished in weeks, yet most residents have not been provided adequate relocation services and there is no process to facilitate their legal right to return. I have personally accompanied KPT residents to “comparable units” that are boarded up and uninhabitable units, and numerous households with disabled kupuna are being sent to walk-ups and inaccessible units. And just this week, we are hearing from residents who declined these inadequate units that they are being told to choose one or leave.

Despite a clear contractual obligation to provide a right to return, the developer of this project is using a [google form](#) to fulfill this obligation, and no contractor has been hired to monitor and communicate with the displaced residents following their displacement. This is wholly unacceptable and does not bode well for redevelopment projects at Mayor Wright, Pālolo Homes, Hālawā and other housing currently under contract.

The problems faced by KPT residents exemplify what occurs in the absence of meaningful enforcement – residents are left to self-advocate without clear requirements or accountability. HB 1325 HD 2 is a critical step to prevent further displacement of local families, and to begin building accountability into future redevelopment projects in Hawai‘i.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1325 HD 2.

/s/

Dina Shek

¹ Dillon Ancheta, *‘Help us’: Public Housing Redevelopment Forces 60 Kalihi Tenants to Relocate*, HAWAII NEWS NOW, January 23, 2025, <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2025/01/24/public-housing-redevelopment-forces-60-kalihi-tenants-relocate/>.

² Talia Sibilla, *Kuhio Park Terrace Tenants Say Lives Upended by Relocation*, HONOLULU STAR-ADVERTISER, February 9, 2025 at B1, <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2025/02/09/hawaii-news/kuhio-park-terrace-tenants-say-lives-upended-by-relocations/>.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:36:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
De Andre Makakoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

Too often in Hawai‘i, **“redevelopment” has meant displacement.** Families who have lived in their homes for generations are pushed out, their communities fractured, and their cultural ties severed—all in the name of “progress.” **House Bill 1325 HD2 is a necessary safeguard to stop this cycle.**

This bill ensures that when new housing developments displace tenants, those tenants are given real protections, including:

- **The right of first refusal at comparable rents**, ensuring they aren’t simply priced out of their own neighborhoods.
- **Meaningful relocation assistance**, so families aren’t left scrambling with nowhere to go.
- **Stronger developer accountability**, requiring transparency and communication throughout the process.

As a **fire survivor from Lahaina**, I have seen firsthand how displacement tears apart communities. After the fire, we watched as rents skyrocketed and longtime residents were priced out of their own home. If we don’t act now, **development will only continue to push local families out, rather than creating real solutions for our housing crisis.**

I urge you to support **HB1325 HD2** to ensure that **new housing benefits the community—not just developers.**

Mahalo for your time and commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s families.

De Andre Makakoa

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 10:50:10 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Leake	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The right of return for displaced tenants in 201H projects ensures that those forced to relocate due to redevelopment have the opportunity to return to newly built affordable housing, preventing permanent displacement and preserving community stability. Please give HB1325 favorable consideration. Mahalo.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 11:06:35 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Hudson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

I'm writing in support of HB1325 HD2 to protect tenants from being pushed out by new developments. This bill ensures they get a fair chance to stay or real help relocating.

Too often, longtime residents are displaced with little support. HB1325 HD2 makes sure new housing benefits the community and places safeguards so local residents won't be priced out of their own community.

With so many Lahania residents relocating to the Mainland out of financial desperation, this bill is very important.

Please support this bill to keep Hawai'i's families in their homes!

Mahalo for all your dedication and hard work.

Jacqueline Hudson 808 269-0295 6 Kiohuohu Lane Lahaina, HI 96761

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:14:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sage-Lee Medeiros-Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Chairman and Commitee,

I am in support of HB1325. Not only in support, but please take the care and attention to those who do not have a place to go once their homes become reconstructed.

V/r

Sage-Lee Medeiros-Garcia

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:27:32 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Inez Z Larson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1325

House Committee on Housing

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Members of the Committee on Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support** of HB1325, which seeks to ensure that government-supported development projects do not permanently displace local residents and instead uphold the principle of housing justice.

As Hawai‘i continues to face a severe housing crisis, it is essential that new construction—especially when supported by public funds—prioritizes the well-being of our local families and communities. HB1325 establishes critical protections by ensuring that tenants displaced due to development receive **relocation assistance and counseling** throughout their displacement and, most importantly, have a **right to return** to their homes once the project is completed.

Without such safeguards, too many residents—particularly working families, kūpuna, and longtime community members—are at risk of being pushed out, losing not only their housing but also their connections to their neighborhoods, schools, and cultural ties. Displacement without a guaranteed right to return only worsens the affordability crisis and contributes to the ongoing erosion of our local communities.

HB1325 is a necessary step toward **balancing economic development with social responsibility**, ensuring that new housing projects truly serve the people of Hawai‘i rather than displacing them. I urge you to pass this measure to protect our local residents and affirm that publicly supported housing development must put the needs of our communities first.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Miss Inez Z Larson

808-778-0271

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:06:04 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheryl Summers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of HB1325 HD2. This measure creates a balanced approach to managing resident displacement in new affordable developments, establishing critical protections for existing community members while facilitating necessary affordable housing construction.

When long-time residents face displacement, they risk long-term adverse impacts to health, education, and finances while communities risk unraveling the social bonds that give our neighborhoods their strength and character. HB1325 HD2 guarantees displaced individuals priority access to comparable units in the new development at affordable rates, ensuring they can return to their community once construction is complete.

If the right to return for these tenants is not offered, the legislation mandates the creation of a dedicated fund providing three months of relocation support, alleviating the economic strain on affected families. These measures transform what could be a destabilizing experience into a well-managed transition with clear outcomes.

While data shows that increased housing supply helps moderate price growth and reduces overall displacement pressure, the immediate impact of construction on existing residents can generate significant neighborhood opposition. This legislation bridges that gap by acknowledging and addressing immediate community concerns while enabling essential housing development to proceed.

By supporting HB1325 HD2, you can help forge a path toward housing development that serves both current and future generations of Hawaii residents. This legislation demonstrates that we can achieve meaningful housing growth while preserving the community connections that make our neighborhoods unique.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:42:52 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bryan Panen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

My name is Bryan Panen. I was born and raised in Kalihi and have lived in different parts of Kalihi. I have lived on the mainland off and on, but Kalihi is home. It is a place that has instilled in me a sense of community and family in a way that the mainland does not. People speak of the Aloha spirit. It is in places like Kalihi that this sense of community and Aloha exist. People all over the world are drawn to Hawaii because of this thing called Aloha.

Each time I've gone away and come back, I've seen changes in Oahu that have drastically changed the cultural and economic landscape of this place I call home. Communities are gentrified and the existing residents are replaced. As this happens, I see that Aloha and the intimacy of the community disappears with the changes.

The backbone of Kalihi is its varying cultures that embrace this particular articulation of community. Kalihi is characterized by a distinct sense of community, a community where neighbors really know each other and have genuine concern for another. The relationships are filled with people who respect one another; where younger generations address older generations as "aunty" or "uncle" or "mama" or "papa" or "nana" or "tata." With this sense of family automatically comes a sense of acceptance, safety, and security. You will be hard-pressed to find this anywhere else in the United States.

However, planned development that is supposed to serve the community is now threatening the very core of Kalihi and displacing those in affordable housing.. HB 1325 is a start in the right direction in protecting these underserved, valuable members of our community. HB 1325 puts in place certain markers that help these residents transition from their displacement. In addition to the stipulations of HB 1325, I would like to see a guarantee that the displaced residents actually have a place to live that is agreeable to them both in terms of location and affordability. Right now the terms of HB 1325 stipulate that developers provide assistance. However, assistance does not guarantee a secured agreeable residence if they choose to move and decline moving back into the new development. Additionally, HB 1325 also stipulates that displaced residents are given the right of first refusal. What is unclear is what happens if the displaced residents choose to return to one of the affordable units. Will they be guaranteed housing until the planned development is complete or are they left to fend for themselves while they await completion of the new development?

In summation, I support HB 1325 if it can be modified to 1) guarantee agreeable relocation for those who opt not to live in the planned development and 2) guarantee agreeable temporary relocation for those who decide to reside in the planned development once construction is complete. Please help Kalihi keep it's identity. This step will not only help Kalihi but give precedence to further planned development in our beloved state of Hawaii.

Kind regards,

Bryan Panen

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 1:53:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Demiliza Saramosing	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Demiliza Saramosing, and I was born and raised in Kalihi. I am a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and I came home to do research in my beloved hometown of Kalihi. My family, like many others in this community, has worked hard to build a life here, despite rising costs and the constant pressure of displacement. Kalihi isn't just a neighborhood, it's home. It's where generations of families have put down roots, where neighbors look out for one another, and where culture and history live in the everyday moments of our lives. My journey through academia and the focus of my dissertation project are shaped and premised on these strong Oceanic networks we have built in Kalihi. But right now, families in Kalihi, Lāhainā, and across Hawai‘i are at risk of losing their homes, not because they can't afford to live here, but because the very projects claiming to provide affordable housing are pushing them out. **That's why I strongly support HB1325.**

This bill is crucial because it ensures that redevelopment does not come at the cost of displacing the very people it claims to serve. Right now, in Kalihi's KPT low-rises, 60 families--more than 100--have been forced out. They were promised assistance, but instead, The Michael's organization is only helping with their move-out, leaving them with no ongoing guidance or guarantee that they can return. We cannot let this pattern continue, especially when developers receive government benefits, subsidies, tax breaks, and relaxed zoning while failing to protect the communities most affected by their projects.

HB1325 is a necessary step to ensure fairness and accountability in affordable housing development. It establishes clear protections:

1. **The Right to Return:** Displaced tenants must be given priority to move back into the completed project. If a development claims to help local residents, then it must actually serve them, not replace them.
2. **Comprehensive Relocation Assistance:** Families should not be left to navigate displacement on their own. This bill requires individualized relocation counseling to help tenants secure stable housing and provides support throughout the entire redevelopment process, not just during move-out.

3. Accountability for Developers Using Public Funds: If developers benefit from government support, they must give back to the communities they impact. Affordable housing should be truly affordable and accessible to those who need it most.

This issue is about more than just housing, it's about preserving our communities, our sense of belonging, and the futures of the families who have helped shape Hawai'i for generations. We've already seen what happens when local families are priced out, pushed out, and forgotten. HB1325 is a way to ensure that progress does not come at the expense of the people who call these places home.

I urge you to pass HB1325 to protect our local families and hold developers accountable to the promises they make. Please pass and kōkua so that this large-scale housing redevelopment project does not conjure a domino-effect of people from Kalihi, Lāhaina, and state-wide being "Priced Out of Paradise." Affordable housing should not mean displacing the very people it is meant to serve.

Daghang Salamat and Mahalo nui for your time and consideration,

Demiliza Saramosing

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 3:15:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
May Sinhvongsa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members,

I am writing to express that **I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1325 HD2** to protect our local families.

We need this bill to make sure local folks who have lived in an area for generations are not being displaced to make way for ‘new affordable housing’ development.

We need this law change to ensure all tenants get comprehensive relocation assistance and the ability to move back to their community. KPT low-rise tenants want to make sure no one in Mayor Wright or other redevelopment projects face [the same struggles they are having](#). KPT low-rise residents have asked for the following to be explicitly required by law:

- a. The right to return to the project, as promised by the developer when they were approved for LIHTC and RHRF subsidies [from HHFDC](#).
- b. Individualized relocation counseling, which provides assistance locating and leasing up in comparable housing and follows tenants for the life of the redevelopment project. Unlike [promises made to received HHFDC funding](#), the developer has contracted a company from Los Angeles to only assist tenants during move out, and left tenants with no further support.

I would like to share a testimony story of one of my patient. She is a Chuukese mother of four who works part-time at McDonald's while caring for her disabled spouse. Being both a provider and a caretaker is overwhelming for her, especially with her limited ability to understand English. However, by God's grace, she has the resilience to face these challenges head-on. She is very grateful to live in the KPT low-rise community because it gives her peace of mind. When she goes to work, she knows that her children are being cared for by neighbors, and the nearby youth center offers academic support. The health center is also close in case medical care is needed. She appreciates having the HPHA management office right here, where she can address tenant concerns, rather than traveling to the main office.

Her sense of security comes from knowing that her family is safe and supported by the community. But with the news of the redevelopment of KPT low-rise, my patient has become fearful. She attended community meetings held in collaboration with Michael's and HPHA but left with more questions and doubts. She was among the first group to be assisted by a housing

specialist but felt disappointed that the home they chosen were unavailable or too far from her children schools & health center.

My patient is heartbroken because she fears she won't be able to return to the community that has become a safe and supportive home for her family. She said that the relocation process has been poorly handled and lacks accountability. She is afraid of being displaced and unable to return to her home. The uncertainty surrounding the redevelopment has caused her a great deal of stress, as she feels her family's stability is at risk. The fear of losing her home and being unable to return to a place that has provided safety and community for so long weighs heavily on her. She is not only concerned about her family's future but also about the disruption to the support network she has built over the years. For her, KPT low-rise isn't just a place to live it's where her children are thriving, where she feels supported, and where she knows that no matter what challenges arise, her community has her back.

- We need this law change to make clear that developers that receive tax breaks, loans, subsidies and relaxed zoning and breaks from permitting and fees from government must give back to our community and not displace local residents then offer the newly constructed units to others.
- Requiring developers to offer the right to return to our local community displaced by development projects means we are making sure any proposed supposed affordable housing project serves those most in need in our local community who have often lived in the area for generations.
- These protections will assist us in making sure new redevelopments in places affected by disaster do not permanently displace folks.

As a community health worker who works with local families at KPT-low rise, I have heard firsthand the uncertainty and fear the redevelopment brings to our patients. My support for this bill comes from genuine concern for our community who, without protection like those proposed in this bill, risk losing not only their home but the support systems that have sustained them, **please support HB1325 HD2.**

Mahalo,

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 8:17:44 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alicia Turlington	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB1325 to protect our local families.

I am a pediatrician in Kalihi where many of my patients are already being affected by the redevelopment of the housing project known as "KPT low-rise" by the families who have lived their for generations. The chaos that this has caused to parents, many with limited English proficiency and already busy working multiple jobs and raising children, is tremendous.

Besides the toll this stress is taking on parents, I'd like to share the view of a pediatrician and how this affects my patients, children. Since I cannot share identifying medical information with you, I will tell you about a fictional story of a patient that reflects what I am seeing. A child with autism, a teenager, let's say, is attending school at Farrington High School. He has been attending this school for years and is used to his routine of catching his school bus, being met by aides and teachers he knows when he gets to school, learning and preparing for life after high school, and then getting his bus home. A child with autism is especially sensitive to change and transitions. New people are challenging, not understanding the triggers and needs of the child. New environments can provoke sensory sensitivities than can lead to behavioral problems including self-harm and non-stop crying. Discomfort can lead to elopement. Why should this child be forced into a new school district, new people, new sensory challenges, at the whims of a housing developer, to meet their timeline, for their profit? Why should a parent be forced to make a housing choice that does not put their child's needs first?

It should be a right that parent being forced to leave their housing be guaranteed that their child can at least attend the same school. When we say comparable housing, it must include allowing the child(ren) to attend the same school(s). We know that moving schools can be disruptive for neurotypical children as well as they may lose learning progress or be introduced to a classroom learning material they didn't yet see in their old class, leading to gaps in learning that can never be filled. Imagine the impact on children with special needs who have Individualized Education Plans developed with parents and their schools?

Lastly, I want to introduce to you the concept of the medical home. This concept was championed by a Hawai'i pediatrician, the late, great Dr. Calvin Sia. In Kalihi, my clinic serves as a medical home to many families. I cherish the relationships that I have formed with families over 17 years of practicing. A medical home means that you value your patient, you put their needs at the center of all that you do, but they are the decision makers and we work collaboratively to improve health. A medical home must also be accessible. What that means is

that families can get to the clinic when they need it. If families are forced to move, many who do not have transportation, they may no longer be able to access the medical home of their choice. They may be forced to lose the relationships they've developed for years with their health care providers.

We need this bill to make sure local folks who have lived in an area for generations are not being displaced to make way for 'new affordable housing' development. We need this law change to ensure all tenants get comprehensive relocation assistance and the ability to move back to their community. KPT low-rise tenants want to make sure no one in Mayor Wright or other redevelopment projects face [the same struggles they are having](#). KPT low-rise residents have asked for the following to be explicitly required by law:

- a. The right to return to the project, as promised by the developer when they were approved for LIHTC and RHRF subsidies [from HHFDC](#).
- b. Individualized relocation counseling, which provides assistance locating and leasing up in comparable housing and follows tenants for the life of the redevelopment project. Unlike [promises made to received HHFDC funding](#), the developer has contracted a company from Los Angeles to only assist tenants during move out, and left tenants with no further support.

I have heard of meetings that have not offered language support. I have not heard any discussion of how children can be kept in their same school districts. I have heard of tenants being shown units that are boarded up and not even habitable. How is this relocation assistance?

We need this law change to make clear that developers that receive tax breaks, loans, subsidies and relaxed zoning and breaks from permitting and fees from government must give back to our community and not displace local residents then offer the newly constructed units to others.

Requiring developers to offer the right to return to our local community displaced by development projects means we are making sure any proposed supposed affordable housing project serves those most in need in our **local** community who have often lived in the area for generations. These protections will assist us in making sure new redevelopments in places affected by disaster, like the Lahaina Fire do not permanently displace folks.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope that you will support HB1325

HB-1325-HD-2

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 11:29:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wendi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in support of House Bill 1325 HD2, which ensures that tenants displaced by new housing developments have real protections.

This bill prevents displacement by requiring developers to either offer displaced tenants a right of first refusal at comparable rents or provide meaningful relocation assistance. It also ensures developers keep tenants informed and accountable throughout the process.

Too often, redevelopment pushes longtime residents out. This bill helps ensure that new housing benefits the community, not just developers.

We urge your support for HB1325 HD2 to protect Hawaii's families from being priced out of their own homes.

Mahalo for your time and commitment to Lahaina's recovery.

Wendi Goodwin