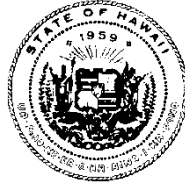


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



HAKIM OUANSAFI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 17907
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

25:OED

Statement of
Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Monday, February 24, 2025
12:00 PM – Room 308, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
HB 703, HD1
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

Honorable Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi and members of the House Committee on Finance, the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony in **support** of House Bill (HB) 703, HD1, which seeks to extend the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program (RSP) for Kupuna to 6/30/2028.

The HPHA is dedicated to providing safe, affordable housing and fostering equitable living environments free from discrimination. Through our public housing and rental assistance programs, we serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community, including:

- Families earning less than 30% of the area median income (AMI)
- Individuals with disabilities
- Elderly residents on fixed incomes

The HPHA would truly appreciate the opportunity to extend State RSP for Kupuna to serve more of our community's at-risk kupuna. This program is crucial because it provides Kupuna with access to safe, affordable housing, which significantly impacts their overall health, wellbeing, and quality of life by reducing financial stress, ultimately leading to better mental and physical health outcomes and a sense of stability in their later years.

Shortly after the passage of Act 98, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, the HPHA contracted with Catholic Charities Hawaii to administer the State RSP for Kupuna and currently have 62 Kupuna



households enrolled in the program with an average rent supplement amount of \$415 per Kupuna household.

The HPHA stands ready and looks forward to assisting the Legislature in this endeavor and looks at this measure as an opportunity to be part of the overall solution needed to address all housing related issues in Hawaii.

The HPHA appreciates the opportunity to provide the Committee with its testimony. We thank you very much for your dedicated and continued support.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
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STATE OF HAWAII
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB703 HD1
Relating to Kupuna Housing

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
REP. KYLE T. YAMASHITA, CHAIR
REP. JENNA TAKENOUCI, VICE CHAIR

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Monday, February 24, 2025, 12:00 P.M., Conference Room 308

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, **supports HB703 HD1**, relating to Kupuna Housing.

3 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure does not include an appropriation.

4 **Purpose and Justification:** The purpose of this bill is to temporarily extend the sunset date for
5 the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 30, 2028. The program provides support
6 to qualified older adults, who are homeless, or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

7 Creative, long-term, affordable housing strategies are needed to prevent individuals and
8 families, who are struggling financially and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. According
9 to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data the poverty rate amongst Americans age sixty-five and
10 older has increased from 8.9% in 2020 to 10.3% in 2021. As housing costs and inflation rise,
11 kūpuna who rely on retirement income from Social Security and/or are on fixed incomes, are
12 struggling to pay for basic necessities. As a result, kūpuna are forced to cut back on essential
13 expenses, such as food, transportation, and medication just to stretch their finite funds. Any

1 setback in their income can affect their ability to pay their mortgage or rent and put them at risk
2 of becoming homeless.

3 The State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna creates a pathway out of homelessness
4 by reducing the financial burden from Hawaii’s high rental costs. Stable housing leads to better
5 physical and mental health and reduces the strain on emergency shelters. Extending this critical
6 program ensures kūpuna have access to safe and affordable housing.

7 **Recommendation:** The EOA supports this measure.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 703 HD1: RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Monday, 2/24/25, 12:00 pm; via Videoconference or Room 308**

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members, Committee on Finance:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i Supports HB 703 HD1, which extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to June 20, 2028.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax-exempt, community-based organization that has provided social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH serves elders, children, families, homeless individuals, veterans, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocate for the most vulnerable people in Hawai'i. We assist over 40,000 people annually across the state and have a long history of addressing affordable housing and homelessness.

CCH supports this bill to ensure that kupuna who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness continue to receive critical rental assistance. Kupuna who have secured housing through this program cannot afford their full rent and will face homelessness again without the extension provided by this bill.

Elderly homelessness is rising nationwide. The National Alliance to End Homelessness projects that homelessness among older adults will nearly triple by 2030. Catholic Charities Hawai'i is witnessing a growing number of elders experiencing homelessness for the first time—often due to losing long-term rental housing as landlords rebuild or renovate, or they struggle to keep up with rent increases on fixed low incomes, or they lose a household member's income (e.g., due to the death of a spouse or partner), or face health challenges.

CCH's Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides housing counseling for elderly residents of O'ahu aged 60+ who are seeking affordable rental housing. Currently, about 84 older adults are on HAP's waiting list for housing counseling—approximately 15% are already homeless, and 75% are at immediate risk of becoming homeless. Most HAP clients have very low incomes and can only afford \$300 to \$500 per month in rent, making rental assistance essential to prevent homelessness.

One typical HAP client is a woman in her mid-70s who maintained stable housing for over 10 years and consistently paid her rent. However, her landlord increased her rent until it matched her entire Social Security income. With limited English skills and no family or support network, she faced imminent homelessness and was terrified. Clients like her are a priority for HAP, but without immediate solutions like Rent Supplement, their housing insecurity remains dire.

We urge your support for this bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.





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**The State Legislature
House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 24, 2025
Conference Room 308, 12:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for H.B. 703, HD1 Relating to Kupuna Housing

Aloha Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP supports H.B. 703, HD1 which extends the sunset date for the state rent supplement program that specifically target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Hawaii's high cost of housing is making it unaffordable for many, but especially for those at low or fixed income. These residents are more vulnerable of becoming dependent on other family members for shelter, or face homelessness. According to AARP/Statista analysis of close to 384 older adults (age 65+) in Hawaii are expected to be evicted in 2025 and more than 1,100+ older adults (age 65+) are expected to experience homelessness in 2025 in Hawaii. It is essential to assist older adults from facing housing crisis and therefore, the proposed H.B.703, HD1 will help many vulnerable kūpuna from being displaced from their residence.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support **H.B. 703, HD1**.

HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2025 4:15:02 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angie Knight	The Institute for Human Services	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

IHS, The Institute for Human Services supports the passing of this bill.



Support for HB703/SB878

Aloha e Representatives, 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.

Bill 703 is an important part of that process, ensuring that our kupuna who are homeless or threatened by homelessness receive support. We have a strong moral obligation to our kupuna and a strong practical interest in reducing homelessness. Such funding should be extended as the state is able.

Makana Hicks-Goo,
Organizer on behalf of LIMBY Hawaii

HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2025 4:13:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Yamashiti and Members of the Finance Committee. I and my wife Deborah ask for your support of HB703 HD1. Many of our Kupuna are struggling to pay rent in our very high cost of living State. Extending the State Rent Supplement Program is a very important positive action to support these senior citizens in need. Thank you for your continued efforts to keep this vital program going.

HB-703-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:59:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 12:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Gregory Misakian and I **support HB703 HD1.**

I currently serve as 1st Vice President of the Kokua Council, an elder advocacy organization in Hawaii since 1972, and also on the Waikiki Neighborhood Board.

The more we can do to help our kupuna in need, the better we are.

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB703 and SB878 Relating to Kupuna Housing
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SENATOR JOY SAN
BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, VICE CHAIR

Our names are Sara and Daniel Medeiros. We live on the island of Hawaii and are retired. We are in STRONG SUPPORT of SB878 Relating to Kupuna Housing.

The lack of affordable housing options disproportionately affects seniors, especially female seniors, who may struggle to find safe and stable living conditions.

https://www.auw.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024_ALICE-Report_Facts-and-Figures_v-25-01-09.

Female seniors are more likely to have chronic health conditions and require regular medical care. Reported instances of family violence, lack of caregivers, mental illness contribute to their inability to secure affordable housing.

Many female seniors have limited financial resources, often due to a lifetime of lower wages and limited access to retirement savings. The Kupuna Housing grants make a big difference in who is housed and who is on the street.

Seniors of both genders are at a higher risk of social isolation, which can exacerbate mental health issues and reduce access to support networks.

We support bills that advocate for additional safe and appropriate affordable housing units specifically for low income seniors. We have a severe shortage of such units in Hawaii county. Extending this bill to a new sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to 6/30/28 is welcomed and appropriate.

Thank you in advance,

Sara and Daniel Medeiros

73-1786 Hao Street

Kailua Kona, HI 96740