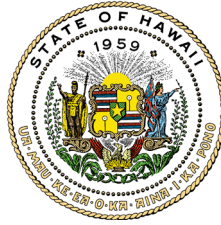


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



CAROLINE CADIRAO
DIRECTOR

Telephone
(808) 586-0100

Fax
(808) 586-0185

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
Relating to Kupuna Housing

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND HOMELESSNESS
REP. LISA MARTEN, CHAIR
REP. IKAIKA OLDS, VICE CHAIR

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

Hearing: Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 9:45 A.M., Conference Room 329

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health, **supports HB703**, 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 6/30/28. The program provides support to
6 qualified kupuna, 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 financially struggling 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 kupuna, 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, kupuna 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 can also help to create a pathway out of
4 homelessness by reducing the financial burden from Hawaii's high rental costs, provide stable
5 housing which can lead to better physical and mental health, and reduce the strain on emergency
6 shelters. Extending this critical program helps to support the aging population and ensure
7 kūpuna have access to safe and affordable housing.

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

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

THE KŪPUNA CAUCUS



HSG_03-11-25 10am HB703

TO:

[COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS](#)

Rep. Lisa Marten, Chair

Rep. Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair

CONCERNING: **HB703** related to the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna

POSITION: **STRONG SUPPORT**

ALOHA Chair Lisa Marten, Vice Chair Ikaika Olds and Members of the Committee,

The Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i has a membership of more than 2,000 politically active and aware seniors and we strongly support this bill.

The DPH Kupuna caucus supports this bill to extend the sunset date for this much needed program. We support the extension of this program for three more years. Many kupuna are faced with rising rental rates. Most kupuna live on a fixed income. When rental rates rise, they are forced to make serious financial decisions like spending less money on food and essentials. As we all know, these kinds of decisions can cause negative effects to their overall health. This could also have a chain reaction effect to the cost of the healthcare system.

We at the DPH Kupuna Caucus ask that you strongly support this bill HB703. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Barbara Penn on behalf of the
Kūpuna Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 703: RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: **Tuesday, 2/11/25; 10:00 AM; via Videoconference or Room 329**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members, Committee on Human Services & Homelessness:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i Supports HB 703, which extends the sunset date for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna to 6/20/28.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax-exempt, community-based organization that has been providing social services in Hawai'i for over 75 years. CCH has programs serving elders, children, families, homeless individuals, and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy for the most vulnerable people in Hawai'i. We serve over 40,000 people each year throughout the state and have a long history of working in affordable housing and homelessness.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i supports this bill to ensure that kupuna who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness will have access to this critical rental assistance. Kupuna who have obtained housing through this assistance cannot afford their full rent and will again become homeless without the extension provided by this bill.

Elderly homelessness is increasing across the country. The National Alliance to End Homelessness states that homelessness among older adults is expected to nearly triple by 2030. Catholic Charities Hawai'i is seeing an increasing number of elders facing homelessness for the first time—often due to losing long-term rental housing as landlords rebuild or renovate, an inability to keep up with rent increases due to fixed low incomes, the loss of a household member's income (e.g., the death of a spouse or partner), or health issues.

CCH's Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides housing counseling for older adults aged 60+ on the island of Oahu who are seeking affordable rental housing. The program currently has 84 older adults waiting to receive HAP's housing counseling—approximately 15% are already homeless, and 75% are at immediate risk of ending up on the street. Most HAP clients are very low-income and can only afford about \$300 to \$500 per month for rent. Therefore, they desperately need rental assistance to avoid homelessness.

One typical HAP client is an elderly woman in her mid-70s who had stable housing for over 10 years, consistently paying rent. However, her landlord raised her rent to a level equal to her Social Security income. Facing homelessness with limited English skills and no relatives or support network, she was scared. This type of client would be a priority for HAP to serve, but there were no immediate solutions for her.

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





1001 Bishop Street | Suite 625 | Honolulu, HI 96813-2830
1-866-295-7282 | Fax: 808-536-2882
aarp.org/hi | aarphi@aarp.org | twitter.com/AARPHawaii
facebook.com/AARPHawaii

The State Legislature
House Committee on Human Services
Tuesday, February 11, 2025
Conference Room 329, 9:45 a.m.

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

Aloha Chair Marten, 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 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 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**.



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB703, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

February 11, 2025

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Human Services & Homelessness committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB703, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING. Pursuant to the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, the Party supports policies that preserve housing for our kupuna, ensuring that they can age in place and remain active in their communities.

The Democratic Party of Hawaii supports public funding going towards programs that ensure that our kupuna can age with dignity. Extending the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna will allow for more resources to go towards assisting kupuna who are struggling with housing instability, improving their standard of living and quality of life overall.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in Support of HB703, RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.