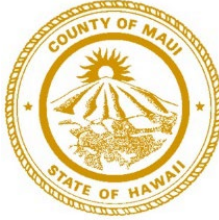


RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

LORI TSUHAKE
Director

JESSICA CROUSE
Deputy Director



DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN CONCERNS
COUNTY OF MAUI
2200 MAIN STREET, SUITE 546
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
PHONE: (808) 270-7805

March 20, 2025

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

FROM: Rowena M. Dagdag-Andaya, Executive on Aging
County of Maui, Department of Housing and Human Concerns, Maui County
Office on Aging

SUBJECT: **Testimony in Support of HCR37 Requesting The Hawaii Emergency
Management Agency To Collaborate With Relevant Agencies To Develop
Initiatives And Outreach Programs To Inform Kupuna About Emergency
Preparedness**

The Maui County Office on Aging (MCOA) strongly supports **HCR37** which requests the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to collaborate with relevant agencies to develop initiatives and outreach programs aimed at informing kupuna about emergency preparedness.

As the designated Area Agency on Aging for Maui County, MCOA recognizes the critical need to equip older adults with the knowledge and resources necessary to prepare for natural disasters and emergencies. The devastating impact of the 2023 wildfires in Lahaina and Kula underscored the unique challenges faced by kupuna, particularly those with mobility limitations, chronic health conditions, and limited access to transportation or communication technology. Ensuring that kupuna are well-informed and prepared for future emergencies is essential to protecting lives and reducing strain on emergency response services.

We commend the Legislature for prioritizing the safety of our older residents by advocating for coordinated efforts between emergency management agencies at the state and county levels. Collaboration is key to ensuring that kupuna-specific concerns—such as evacuation planning, shelter accessibility, and medical preparedness—are addressed in a comprehensive and culturally appropriate manner.

Additionally, we encourage that this effort also considers the needs of **persons with disabilities**, many of whom face similar challenges during emergencies. Individuals with disabilities may require additional assistance with evacuation, accessible communication, and shelter accommodations. By incorporating their needs into emergency preparedness initiatives, we can ensure a more inclusive and effective disaster response for all vulnerable populations.

Current Efforts by the Maui County Office on Aging

1. Community Outreach and Education

- Our teams deliver presentations to senior clubs and other community groups to educate older adults and caregivers on the services provided by our department. We actively track the number of people reached.
- During these presentations, our staff disseminates emergency preparedness resources, including information on evacuation planning and disaster response.

2. Partnerships with Local Community Organizations

- MCOA works closely with contracted service providers, ensuring that they have emergency protocols in place as part of their agreements with MCOA. This guarantees that providers are prepared to support clients during emergencies.
- MCOA recently participated in meetings facilitated by AARP Hawaii to develop an emergency plan template for Independent Senior Housing properties. Meeting participants included:
 - Area Agencies on Aging from all four counties
 - Departments of Emergency Management
 - The State Fire Council
 - Hawaii Emergency Management Agency
 - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development staff

Overall, emergency preparedness education is a key component of this effort. While agencies work to improve evacuation planning and support services, it is equally important for members of the public to take an active role in their own emergency preparedness. Encouraging older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers to create personal evacuation plans, stay informed about emergency alerts, and participate in preparedness workshops will help ensure a safer and more coordinated response during a disaster.

Mahalo for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **HCR37**.

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 1:27:19 PM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Sugimura	Hawaii Council of Community associations	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HCR 37

We support all efforts for emergency preparedness and encourage all the agencies to require condominium buildings to implement emergency prepared and evacuation plans and procedures. And to be on the same education message so that there are no conflicting messages that can cause confusion among the population no matter what age.

In an emergency, all the residents in a building are at risk for confusion no matter what the age and we recognize that the seniors may require more guidance or education and reminders on these matters.

Thank you for allowing the submission of this testimony.

Jane Sugimura, President

Hawaii Council of Community Associations



Testimony to the House Committee on Public Safety
Friday, March 21, 2025
9:00 a. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 411 and via videoconference

Re: HCR 37 Requesting the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to collaborate with relevant agencies to develop initiatives and outreach programs to inform kupuna about emergency preparedness.

Dear Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Public Safety:

I am Gary Simon, a member of the board of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition, whose mission is to improve the quality of life of those who give and receive care by increasing community awareness of caregiver issues through continuing advocacy, education, and training. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition.

The Hawai'i Family Caregiver Coalition strongly supports HCR 37.

Kupuna are particularly vulnerable in a disaster. Education and outreach on emergency preparedness will significantly enhance the safety and welfare of kupuna and caregivers of kupuna during an emergency.

We urge you to support HCR 37, and we urge you to recommend its passage.

Mahalo for seriously considering the resolution.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Simon".

Gary Simon



Email garysimon@hawaii.rr.com



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813
866-295-7282 | aarp.org/hi | hiaarp@aarp.org |
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | facebook.com/aarphawaii

**The State Legislature
House Committees on Public Safety
Friday, March 21, 2025
Conference Room 411, 9:00 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Della Belatti
FROM: Keali'i Lopez, State Director AARP Hawai'i
Re: Support for H.C.R. 37

Aloha Chair Belatti and Members of the Committee,

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people fifty and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families. On behalf of our nearly 135,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share our testimony.

AARP strongly supports H.C.R. 37 which would encourage the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency to collaborate with relevant agencies to develop initiatives and outreach programs to inform kupuna about emergency preparedness.

The Lahaina fire and, in fact, every major natural disaster for the last several decades has made clear that kupuna are more likely to perish in a natural disaster than younger people. People over 60 made up more than two-thirds of the deaths in Lahaina.

The Lahaina Fire Final Phase Three report acknowledges the number of deaths of kupuna, but none of its detailed recommendations include initiatives that focus specifically on reducing kupuna deaths.

We know that the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency is doing its best with the resources that they have to help all of us survive the next disaster and AARP has worked with HIEMA staff on promoting disaster resilience in communities – organizing communities and neighborhoods in advance of a disaster so they can help each other out before, during and after a disaster.

AARP worked with FEMA to develop a Disaster Resilience Toolkit, a 44-page booklet for community leaders with tips and tools to develop disaster resilience in their neighborhoods. AARP Hawai'i also worked with the nonprofit disaster organization the Saint Bernard Project to develop a checklist for managers of senior independent living facilities so they can create emergency plans and practice what to do in a disaster. We are beginning to introduce the checklist to senior affordable housing communities throughout the state.

AARP does these things because we see a need. Too many kupuna do not know what to do in a disaster. Caregivers of kupuna also need information on how to develop their emergency plans. It's especially important for caregivers of kupuna with dementia or who have mobility and other health issues to build a team of people who can help and to know what to do if they need to shelter in place or if they have to evacuate.

Too few kupuna know how to tell if they have to evacuate or if they are better off sheltering in place in a disaster. And some kupuna do not have familiarity with or access to technology to notify them about what to do in a disaster.

AARP can play a role as an educational resource for disaster management. But we are not a disaster management agency. A focused effort to help kupuna survive a disaster must come from the communities themselves – from friends, family and neighbors with government support and leadership.

That's why this resolution is needed and appreciated by AARP and other kupuna groups.

Government is overwhelmed during a disaster. It can't do everything and be everywhere all at once. But government can do better before a disaster in preparing people, especially kupuna and family caregivers, to survive a disaster and to survive in the immediate aftermath of a disaster with the help of family and neighbors.

Note: Included is a link to [aarp.org article](#), written after the Lahiana fire, that includes interview with disaster experts and information on what other communities are doing to increase disaster preparation with the aim of reducing kupuna deaths. It provides the committee with good background information

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Leadership Board**

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LJ R. Duenas,
Executive Director
Alzheimer's Association

**Testimony to the House Committee on Public Safety
Friday, March 21, 9:00 AM**

Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 411, and Videoconference

RE: HCR37

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this resolution requesting the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to collaborate with relevant agencies to develop initiatives and outreach programs to inform kupuna about emergency preparedness. My name is Coby Chock, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the Alzheimer's Association. I write in strong support of HCR37 with an amendment, to ensure those living with dementia and their caregivers are prepared and safe in the event of an emergency.

The Alzheimer's Association Hawaii Chapter is dedicated to supporting individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. With 31,200 people living with Alzheimer's disease in Hawaii, 60,000 caregivers providing \$1.9 billion in unpaid care, and a rapidly aging population, it is critical for us to keep the vulnerable individuals in the community safe.

This resolution will significantly benefit individuals impacted by Alzheimer's disease and dementia by ensuring they receive crucial information and resources to stay safe during emergencies. Given their heightened vulnerability, it is essential to include caregivers in these efforts, as they are the primary support system for those living with Alzheimer's. By equipping caregivers with the necessary knowledge and tools, we can enhance the overall safety and well-being of both the individuals affected and their caregivers, ensuring a more resilient community in times of crisis.

To ensure those impacted by dementia are included, we humbly offer the following amendment for your consideration:

"BE IT RESOLVED...to develop initiatives and outreach programs to inform kupuna and caregivers for individuals living with dementia about emergency preparedness; and..."

We urge your favorable consideration of this legislation and our amendment. Mahalo for your support and the opportunity to testify in support! If you have questions, please contact me at 808-451-3410 or ckchock@alz.org.

Coby Chock
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
Alzheimer's Association - Hawaii

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 9:47:22 PM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Otaguro	Be Ready Manoa	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Elected officials,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Be Ready Manoa, an approved 501c3 organization whose primary mission is to educate the residents of Manoa about disaster preparedness, as well as a senior citizen. I support SCR22/HCR37.

- Many senior citizens have multiple vulnerabilities that necessitate the development of outreach programs in the event of a natural or other disaster. While there are programs assisting vulnerable seniors for daily living, additional support will be required during disasters.
- Existing programs that assist the senior population should collaborate with relevant City and State agencies/departments to ensure additional provisions are in place during disasters. The City and State should also coordinate with these senior programs to ensure sufficient coverage and coordination when a disaster occurs.
- The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA), given its expertise in disaster management, is a logical choice to organize such coordination. This department will need funding to fulfill any additional responsibilities in bringing together existing senior-centric organizations like AARP and other resources (the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters – aka VOAD which includes community groups like Be Ready Manoa, and the Center for Resilient Neighborhoods – aka CERENE) to develop appropriate outreach programs and related services.
- It is inevitable that a disaster – such as a hurricane – will affect Hawaii, so it is prudent to proactively seek effective and efficient methods to educate and support our kupuna. While I have the resources to keep myself and my family safe, there are many individuals in the community who do not have that capacity and will require extra guidance – whether through easy-to-understand materials in their primary language, information on sheltering in place, or evacuation options for those with limited mobility.

Sincerely,

Glenn Otaguro

Senior Citizen

Be Ready Manoa

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HCR37

REQUESTING THE HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO COLLABORATE WITH RELEVANT AGENCIES TO DEVELOP INITIATIVES AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS TO INFORM KUPUNA ABOUT EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

March 21, 2025

Aloha, Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto and committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole. In our 2025 legislative priorities stating a requirement for HIEMA to develop and improve emergency preparedness for our residents, in particular, our Kupuna. The Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21 has made it a priority for Pearl City to be prepared for natural disasters such as hurricanes, tsunamis, and earthquakes.

I am in STRONG SUPPORT OF HCR37.

Our greatest concerns during HIEMA ordered emergency evacuations and preparedness:

- We have a large elderly population in Pearl City and our Kupuna are extremely vulnerable in emergency situations due to their physical limitations, chronic health conditions and lack of access to communication technology resources
- We have numerous elderly care homes in Pearl City and throughout the islands and the care and safety of our Kupuna is paramount when we have to evacuate due to a disaster
- We require a HIEMA outreach program to make sure our Kupuna are well-informed about emergency procedures and evacuation plan for the location care home they are residing. We need to make sure each care home has a solid emergency and evacuation plan.

The Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21 requires the State Legislature and HIEMA need to collaborate and build solid relationships with all emergency agencies at the Federal, State and City levels agencies. The State Legislature and HIEMA needs to make sure all Kupuna Care Homes have a solid emergency evacuation plan.

Please approve HCR37. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/20/2025 3:10:01 PM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie R. Samudio	Kaneohe/Kahaluu Community Emergency Response Team (KKCERT)	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We understand that HIEMA already does 'collaborate with relevant agencies to develop initiatives and outreach programs to inform kupuna about emergency preparation', especially when asked by the community. They may at times take the initiative, but that is not the intent of this Resolution. 'Requesting' HIEMA is a rather weak approach to a vital need. It must be part of their operations

In addition, you must add to the Resolution 'informing our disabled community' for this to be more than a nice gesture.

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/18/2025 3:32:35 PM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 1:07:39 PM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HCR37. Please pass this concurrent resolution.

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/19/2025 1:16:33 PM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Suppoprt HCR 37

Our state population is aging. Many of the young population have moved out of the state leaving their aging family members, our aging population, to figure things out on their own.

Our family had always made sure our parents had certain provisions stored and we often would change their smoke alarm batteries each year. Our neighbors had our cell phone #'s just in case.

We need to provide to our aging citizens a stronger "Be Prepared" education and a sort of enforcement. A strong word "enforcement" but something that will be in the faces of our citizens.

It is hope that each agency will send out the same education message on the "how to".

Thank you for this opportunity to submit this testimony.

HCR-37

Submitted on: 3/21/2025 8:19:42 AM

Testimony for PBS on 3/21/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Evelyn Lane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Evelyn Lane. I am born on Oahu and I live in HUD housing for Kupuna and disabled individuals in Kahuku town. Our community is a fire trap, surrounded by Australian pines and run down blighted and derelict old Plantation housing that needs to be fixed or torn down. In the past, some of our Kupuna had to evacuate due to smoke inhalation, as a wooded area was extinguished in the middle of the night. We have one way in and one way out. We do not have an official Emergency Evacuation Plan for the Kupuna, Especially those living in subsidized housing. Most of the Kupuna who live in the 64 Unit duplex, community adjacent to the Kahuku city golf course they do not drive, they have physical disabilities, live alone, have cognitive decline are using wheelchairs and walkers.

As you all are well aware when hazards occur, at least 50% if not more of the population who parish will be Kupuna. We need to increase equity or our Kupuna by requiring Hawaii Emergency Management to work with agencies and organizations to support Kupuna safety.

it has been my experience on the Windward side, Kupuna are extremely challenged by technology, even a flip phone can be difficult. The struggles Kupuna experience just trying to create a password or open a program, download a document, trying to find a real news source on the Internet, etc. Many Kupuna lack the financial means to prepare for a disaster, in 2019 the mean income or older adults was \$27,398. And another 10% of the Kupuna make less than \$10,000 a year. (AAPR Disaster Resilience tool Kit income statistics).

It's very hard to save disaster funds when you live in a place where it cost so much money to buy food and pay rent. Kupuna struggle to make doctors appointments, get medical, transportation, acquire food, and now they'll need help in preparing for the future in the event of a disaster due to climate change. But we need government support.

We don't have much time, the government doesn't have any storm rated shelters. Not even a category one storm shelter on the island. Let alone a safe space on the island to shelter our population in a hurricane disaster. This should be a call to all hands on deck. We have no time to lose just studying the situation, and then implementing a plan over a long period of time. Will leave us vulnerable with our pants down.

It is time to learn from everyone else across the world, and use new best practices for the future. We need to be creative, collaborative, and approach resilience as an opportunity to secure our future. Keeping the surroundings as safe as possible for all who live and visit our community by

supporting this measure to provide disaster equity to Kupuna, thereby giving Kupuna a chance to live through to the next disaster.

I myself, when I was a single parent, experienced a huge natural disaster in October 1989! The San Francisco earthquake. I was working in the financial district when I was stranded for the evening, leaving my eight year old son, on the other side of the collapsed Bay Bridge.

Also, I live near the Oakland Hills fire, And could see the smoke heading our direction, but for the mountain we were saved. But every day I rode to work on the rapid transit system, Witnessing all the burned out homes with their chimney and foundations left behind in front of the landmark Fremont hotel. I knew people personally, who lost loved ones in that disaster.

Today, our state is not prepared for a category one let alone a category, five hurricane. We have not figured out how to support the most vulnerable in a crisis. We know the largest portion of people who are left behind to die in these disasters are Kupuna!!!!

As a disabled Kupuna (since 26 years of age) community member, I have made it my goal to become and stay as healthy as possible. So if we have a disaster, I can walk out on my own Steam. I came to this decision when I witnessed Kupuna being left behind in assisted living and nursing homes in disaster after disaster. Since then I have joined the Hau'ula community, and where the community is working on resilience for our district. However, Kahuku Kupuna might not be able to make it to Hua'ula in the event of a natural disaster. In joining With the Hui O Hau'ula Community I have been enabled to join their Community Emergency Response Team(CERT). My town needs to make emergency preparation's for the community of Kahuku. We need help organizing ,funding, planning, preparing training, cleaning, re-organizing.

We need leadership to facilitate, educate along with training and preparation.

It takes time to get prepared for something we have never experienced before. Most Kupuna believe the government will take care of them and they don't want to leave the security of their homes or be asked to leave a pet behind.

So for all these reasons, I pray you all will support this measure for your Kapuna and the greater community.

Mahalo Plenty

Mahalo plenty