



Testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Wednesday, April 16, 2025
1:15 p. m.
State Capitol Conference Room 430 and via videoconference

Re: SCR 22 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 Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Honorable Members of the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness:

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 SCR 22.

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 SCR 22, 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



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**The State Legislature
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
Wednesday, April 16, 2025
Conference Room 430, 1:15 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Lisa Marten, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. Lopez, State Director AARP Hawai'i
Re: Support for S.C.R. 22

Aloha Chair Marten and the 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 S.C.R. 22 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

SCR-22

Submitted on: 4/14/2025 6:37:33 PM

Testimony for HSH on 4/16/2025 1:15:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wesley Oda	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:

- 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.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit my testimony.

SCR-22

Submitted on: 4/15/2025 10:16:16 AM

Testimony for HSH on 4/16/2025 1:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

In supporting this Resolution, KKCERT is hopeful that HIEMA will be able to expand its community involvement/engagement efforts to more effectively reach our kupuna.

The State Legislature
Support of SCR 22

To Whom It May Concern

I am a 90 year old widowed senior living alone in an area that would be greatly damaged and probably inaccessible should there be a serious flooding, hurricane, or tsunami.

Each year I dread the hurricane season for fear that we will be hit by one. It is a very stressful, fearful time for me. I need the information to survive so I wholeheartedly support the idea of HCR 37.

Barbara Tatsuguchi

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