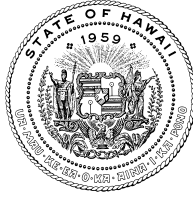


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

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 HOUSING

February 04, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 430

In consideration of

**HOUSE BILL 1777**

**RELATING TO HOUSING.**

Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** this House Bill 1777, which addresses the critical issue of tenant displacement during housing redevelopment projects.

Most of HHFDC's affordable housing projects do not displace residents. If a project does cause displacement, we typically require developers to provide relocation assistance.

This bill provides a balanced approach by ensuring that affordable housing projects supported by HHFDC include measures to protect displaced tenants. Specifically, the bill requires developers to:

1. Offer displaced tenants the right of first offer for a comparable unit in the new project.
2. Provide replacement housing payments to ease the financial burden of relocation.
3. Share clear information and maintain communication with tenants throughout the redevelopment process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Parents And  
Children Together**  
BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1777 RELATING TO HOUSING**

**TO:** Chair Evslin, Vice-Chair Miyake, & Members,  
House Committee on Housing  
**FROM:** Trisha Kajimura, Vice-President of Strategy and External Affairs  
**DATE:** February 4, 2026 at 9:00 AM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1777**, which requires developers under the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction due to the development of affordable housing projects. These tenants will have the right of first offer of a comparable unit, receive replacement housing payments and assisted through the process. Developers will also be required to establish procedures to track and maintain communication with the displaced tenants through the redevelopment period.

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 18,000 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](mailto:tkajimura@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.

# TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1777

## RELATING TO HOUSING

**TO:** House Committee on Housing (HSG)

**FROM:** Maui Housing Hui

**DATE:** February 2, 2026

**RE:** STRONG SUPPORT FOR HB1777 – Requiring Developers to Assist Tenants in HHFDC Housing Projects

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## Introduction

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

Maui Housing Hui is a tenants equity organization dedicated to protecting and advancing the rights of renters throughout Maui County and the State of Hawai‘i. We respectfully submit this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HB1777, which requires developers receiving financing from the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to provide meaningful protections and assistance to tenants displaced by these projects, including a clear **right of first offer** so that current tenants have a fair and realistic opportunity to return to comparable homes in the redeveloped project.

## Why This Bill Matters

HB1777 addresses a critical gap in our state's housing development framework. While we desperately need more affordable housing, we cannot ignore the reality that new development sometimes displaces existing tenants—many of whom are already struggling with Hawai‘i's housing affordability crisis. This bill ensures that public investment in housing development includes protections for the very people who need housing most.

## Centering Maui in the Housing Crisis

While the housing crisis is statewide, its impacts are felt with particular severity in Maui County, especially in the wake of the August 2023 wildfires that destroyed thousands of homes, displaced roughly 12,000 people, and compounded an already dire shortage of truly affordable units [1][2]. Surveys and assessments of fire-impacted households show sharp increases in rent burdens, crowding, and forced moves off-island or away from West Maui, deepening poverty and housing instability for survivors [3][4].

For Maui tenants, displacement is no longer an abstract risk; it is a daily reality layered on top of disaster recovery, trauma, and financial strain [1][4][5]. In this context, HB1777's

protections—especially the right of first offer and replacement housing payments—are not merely technical provisions; they are essential tools to help ensure that Maui families who have already lost so much do not face a second wave of displacement driven by publicly supported redevelopment [4].

## Post-Disaster Recovery, Community Cohesion, and Public Health

Research on the Maui wildfires documents serious ongoing mental and physical health impacts, including high rates of anxiety, depression, and reported declines in overall health among survivors, which are closely tied to prolonged housing instability and uncertainty [4][5][6]. When families are pushed from place to place, living in hotels, temporary rentals, or crowded shared arrangements, it becomes harder to maintain access to medical care, schools, steady employment, and trusted social networks that are protective for health [1][4][6].

Stable, locally rooted housing is also fundamental to community cohesion on Maui, where generational ties, neighborhood relationships, and mutual aid networks have been central to recovery efforts [1][4]. If residents are priced out, displaced, or permanently separated from their home communities by redevelopment, the island loses not only population, but the social fabric that makes collective recovery possible [1][3][7].

## Cultural Continuity and the Right of First Offer

For Native Hawaiian communities and long-time local families, housing displacement is not just an economic issue; it threatens cultural continuity, language, practices, and place-based identity that depend on remaining in ancestral and long-established communities [1][4][7]. In a post-disaster setting like Maui's, ensuring that tenants have a right of first offer to return to comparable units in HHFDC-assisted projects is a concrete way to honor that connection to place, preventing "disaster gentrification" where public investment inadvertently accelerates cultural loss [4].

By requiring developers to affirmatively reach out to affected tenants, track them through the construction and leasing process, provide replacement housing payments, and honor a real right of first offer, HB1777 helps keep Maui residents anchored in their communities instead of scattering families across islands or out of the state entirely [1][3]. ***This is essential not only for individual households, but for the longevity of Maui's cultural life, 'ōlelo, 'ohana-based caregiving, and community-led recovery efforts*** [1][4][5].

## Statewide Housing Affordability Crisis

Beyond Maui's unique post-disaster context, Hawai'i faces a severe housing affordability crisis that disproportionately impacts renters statewide:

- Hawai'i has the highest housing costs relative to income in the nation
- Many working families spend over 50% of their income on rent
- Maui County faces particular challenges following the 2023 wildfires, which displaced thousands of residents and exacerbated existing housing shortages
- Rental vacancy rates remain critically low, leaving displaced tenants with few options
- Without protections, development can displace long-term residents who cannot find alternative affordable housing

# Key Benefits of HB1777

## 1. Accountability for Public Investment

When HHFDC provides financing for housing projects, taxpayer dollars are being invested. HB1777 ensures that this public investment comes with public responsibility. Developers who benefit from state financing must demonstrate commitment to the community by assisting affected tenants and providing them with a meaningful right of first offer to return.

## 2. Prevention of Displacement and Right to Return

This bill recognizes that building new housing should not come at the cost of displacing existing residents. By requiring tenant assistance and the right of first offer, HB1777:

- Protects vulnerable renters from homelessness
- Maintains community stability and cultural continuity on Maui and throughout the state
- Provides tenants a realistic pathway to return to their communities through the right of first offer
- Ensures development benefits rather than harms existing residents
- Creates accountability mechanisms for developers receiving public funds

## 3. Balanced Development Approach

HB1777 strikes an important balance between encouraging housing development and protecting tenant rights. It does not prevent development but ensures it proceeds responsibly with consideration for human impact.

## 4. Strengthening Community Trust

By requiring developers to assist tenants, this bill builds public trust in housing development and HHFDC programs. Communities are more likely to support needed housing projects when they know protections exist for current residents.

# Critical Protections for Maui County

Maui County has experienced unprecedented housing displacement in recent years. The 2023 Lahaina wildfires displaced over 12,000 residents, many of whom remain in temporary housing or have been forced to leave the island entirely [1][2]. As rebuilding and development proceed—including projects that may receive HHFDC financing—HB1777 provides essential protections to ensure that:

- Long-term Maui residents are not further displaced by development projects but instead have a guaranteed right of first offer to return
- Developers receiving state financing contribute to community stability and post-disaster recovery
- Tenants have resources, replacement housing payments, and support during transitions

- Cultural and community ties are preserved during redevelopment, preventing permanent loss of Native Hawaiian and local families from their ancestral communities
- Public health outcomes improve through housing stability rather than prolonged displacement and trauma

## Addressing Potential Concerns

Some may argue that tenant assistance requirements could discourage development. However:

- This requirement applies only to projects receiving HHFDC financing—a privilege that comes with public responsibility
- Tenant assistance costs are manageable compared to overall project budgets and can be incorporated into development planning
- The social cost of displacement—including homelessness services, emergency housing, and community disruption—far exceeds the cost of proactive tenant assistance
- Similar requirements in other jurisdictions have not prevented housing development

## What Tenant Assistance Should Include

We recommend that tenant assistance provisions include:

- Adequate advance notice of displacement (minimum 120 days)
- Relocation assistance and moving cost coverage (replacement housing payments)
- Temporary housing assistance or rent subsidies during transition
- Clear procedures for exercising the right of first offer, with proactive developer outreach and tracking
- Right of first offer to comparable units at rent levels that do not exceed prior rent by more than a reasonable percentage
- Connection to social services and housing resources
- Language access for non-English speaking tenants, especially critical in Maui's diverse immigrant communities
- Transparent communication throughout the development timeline so tenants know when they can return

## Broader Policy Context

HB1777 aligns with emerging best practices in housing policy nationwide. Progressive jurisdictions recognize that sustainable housing development must include:

- Anti-displacement protections
- Community benefit agreements
- Tenant rights in publicly-financed development

- Equitable development frameworks that prevent gentrification

Hawai‘i should lead rather than lag in protecting tenants while promoting development.

## Conclusion

Maui Housing Hui strongly supports HB1777 because it recognizes a fundamental truth: housing development should create housing security for all, not just future residents. By requiring developers receiving HHFDC financing to assist affected tenants and provide a meaningful right of first offer, this bill ensures that public investment serves the public good—particularly in Maui County, where post-disaster recovery demands that we keep families rooted in their communities rather than scattering them across the state or beyond.

We urge the Committee to pass HB1777 and send a clear message that Hawai‘i's housing development will proceed with justice, equity, and compassion for all residents—including those already struggling to maintain their homes and those working to rebuild their lives after disaster.

**We respectfully urge you to PASS HB1777.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

---

### Submitted by:

Maui Housing Hui  
Maui County, Hawai‘i

### Contact Information:

Jade Moreno and Nara Boone  
mauihousinghui@gmail.com

## References

- [1] PBS NewsHour. (2024, August 8). Chronic housing shortage leaves Maui residents displaced a year after deadly wildfire. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/chronic-housing-shortage-leaves-maui-residents-displaced-a-year-after-deadly-wildfire>
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- [3] Maui Now. (2024, October 7). Maui wildfire survey uncovers alarming rise in poverty, housing instability for fire survivors. <https://mauinow.com/2024/10/08/maui-wildfire-survey-uncovers-alarming-rise-in-poverty-housing-instability-for-fire-survivors/>
- [4] UHERO. (2024, May 14). Maui wildfire exposure study. <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/MauiExposureStudy.pdf>
- [5] University of Hawai‘i News. (2025, May 15). Maui immigrant wildfire survivors continue to face gaps in housing. <https://www.hawaii.edu/news/2025/05/16/maui-immigrant-wildfire-survivors-challenges/>

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[7] Natural Hazards Center. (2024, December 31). Health & environmental impacts: 2023 Maui wildfires. <https://hazards.colorado.edu/health-and-extreme-weather-research/assessing-health-and-environmental-impacts-of-the-2023-maui-wildfires>





# HAWAII APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
**Support for HB1777 – Relating to Housing**  
House Committee on Housing  
Wednesday, February 4, 2026 at 9:00AM Conf. Rm. 430 and via Videoconference

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Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the committee;

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB1777**, which establishes a method of stabilizing residents who may be displaced by new HHFDC assisted projects. This legislation creates a framework that addresses potential tensions between our urgent need for new affordable housing and community concern of new developments, while protecting our existing communities and their residents.

201H is one of the best tools in this state to address our housing crisis and it is critical that we use this tool to promote new housing in a way that stabilizes existing residents and puts in a method for addressing potential displacement of tenants. One of the most persistent concerns raised about new development, and specifically redevelopment, is the displacement of current residents and the permanent loss of community connections.<sup>1</sup>

HB1777 addresses the issues and concerns around displacement by establishing a clear, predictable framework for residents protections during redevelopment. By requiring meaningful relocation assistance, clear communication, and the right return to comparable affordable units, the measure ensures that new housing investment does not come at the expense of people who already call these communities home.

These protections could help reduce opposition to housing projects by addressing the human impacts of development head-on. Research consistently shows that new housing supply helps moderate housing costs over time,<sup>2</sup> but when residents fear displacement without recourse, resistance hardens.<sup>3</sup> This bill helps bridge that gap by allowing housing to move forward while maintaining trust, dignity, and stability for affected residents.

HB1777 recognizes that housing production and resident stability are not competing goals. When done thoroughly, they reinforce each other.

We respectfully urge the committee to move HB1777 forward. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://escholarship.org/content/qt7bx938fx/qt7bx938fx.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://escholarship.org/content/qt5d00z61m/qt5d00z61m\\_noSplash\\_2f9309175eb6c1375a544dc12b3ae1e6.pdf](https://escholarship.org/content/qt5d00z61m/qt5d00z61m_noSplash_2f9309175eb6c1375a544dc12b3ae1e6.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/07352166.2019.1623684>

**HB-1777**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 5:06:25 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By  | Organization           | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|---------------|------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Kami Yamamoto | Hawai'i Workers Center | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

Aloha e Committee Chair Evslin & Vice Chair Miyake. My name is Kami Yamamoto and I am the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Workers Center. I am providing testimony in full support of HB1777 on behalf of our organization.

For the first five years of our organization, we operated on the first floor of Tower B at Kūhiō Park Terrace. As renovations started, families who lived at KPT for years were displaced and left without any information on when they could return. As Civil Beat reported, "Relocation was delayed for months as tenants...Some had been sent to apartments that were already occupied or...to others far from their workplaces, doctors and children's schools, or that were inaccessible to people with disabilities. Also, contrary to housing authority policy and the approved relocation plan, properly translated documents were not always provided to tenants who don't speak English."

The passage of HB1777 would provide some accountability for the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation. This measure will play a role in helping to stop the cycle of displacement and disruption of livelihoods for working class families in Hawai'i.



# 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 HB1777

Submitted to: Committee on Housing  
Representative Luke A. Evslin, Chair  
Representative Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair

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

In strong support of HB1777 to protect local families facing displacement due to redevelopment.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing me to testify.

As President & CEO of Adult Friends for Youth (AFY), for the past 18 years and having worked directly with high-risk youth for over 20 years, this nonprofit organization dedicated to the safety, stability, and well-being of children and youth in our communities. We work closely with our youth and families living in public housing and redevelopment-impacted areas, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective on House Bill 1777.

Over the past couple of years, residents of Kuhio Park Terrace have lacked clear, precise, and meaningful communication regarding their future housing relocation and their right to return to a new development. Many have endured significant hardship that has contributed to mental and physical instability, which is deeply concerning—particularly for the youth living in these households. The struggles have been real, and families need strong voices to help advocate for them. AFY is committed to being one of those voices.

HB 1777 provides essential and practical protections by ensuring:

1. A clear right of first offer of a comparable unit in the new development;
2. Comprehensive relocation assistance for all displaced tenants, including replacement housing payments, individualized relocation services, and ongoing support throughout the redevelopment process; and
3. Accountability measures to ensure compliance with these requirements.

From a youth-serving perspective, housing stability is foundational. HB 1777 offers clarity, fairness, and accountability that can reduce uncertainty, minimize displacement-related harm, and help families—and the children within them—remain connected to their communities.

For these reasons, Adult Friends for Youth respectfully urges your strong support of HB 1777. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to housing policies that protect families and promote the well-being of youth.

I appreciate your time on this matter!

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Spencer-Chun



Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i  
A Project of the William S. Richardson School of Law

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

Representative Luke A. Evslin, Chair

Representative Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 4, 2026 at 9:00am (Room 430)

**Re: SUPPORT for HB 1777, Relating to Housing**

Dear Committee Members,

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 public housing tenants and residents facing unstable housing situations. We testify in **SUPPORT** for **HB 1777**, which would prevent further displacement of low-income residents impacted by affordable housing redevelopment across Hawai'i.

Our Medical-Legal Partnership program has worked with residents of the Kūhiō Park Terrace (KPT) Low-Rise over the last two years as they faced the demolition of their homes in the name of redevelopment. We have seen how the redevelopment of low-income housing can result in the permanent uprooting of tight-knit local communities, with longtime resident families left to face further housing instability. This often occurs when developers promise, but are not required, to provide relocation services and a right of first offer in the new housing project.

As detailed by [Civil Beat](#)<sup>1</sup>, over the last year, sixty-four KPT Low-Rise units were demolished to build 304 affordable housing units, yet most residents faced deeply inadequate relocation services and had no process to facilitate their contractually required right to return. I personally accompanied KPT residents to a “comparable unit” that was boarded up and uninhabitable. Households with disabled elders were offered walk-ups and inaccessible units. And families with school-aged children were sent to units far outside their school districts. This struggle is still on-going, and some of those same KPT tenants filed a lawsuit against the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority for violating their rights under federal law related to the KPT redevelopment.

This exemplifies what occurs in the absence of meaningful enforcement – displaced residents are left to self-advocate without clear requirements or accountability. HB 1777 is a critical step to prevent further loss of local families, and to begin building accountability into the numerous redevelopment projects in Hawai'i to come.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1777.

/s/

Dina Shek

Legal Director

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Hay, *O'ahu Public Housing Tenants Promised Relocation Help Hit Dead-Ends*, Honolulu Civil Beat, February 27, 2025, <https://www.civilbeat.org/2025/02/o%ca%bbahu-public-housing-tenants-promised-relocation-help-hit-dead-ends/>.



**Hawai'i YIMBY**

Honolulu, HI 96814

[hawaiiyimby.org](http://hawaiiyimby.org)

[info@hawaiiyimby.org](mailto:info@hawaiiyimby.org)

February 4, 2026

House Committee on Housing

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SUPPORT for HB 1777 - RELATING TO HOUSING**

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we write in **support of HB 1777**, which requires protections and assistance for tenants who are displaced by housing projects that receive support from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation. Hawai'i's housing shortage remains severe and will continue to require the redevelopment of existing residential areas into more dense housing. As we redevelop older housing stock, it is essential that current residents are treated fairly and given a meaningful opportunity to remain part of their community.

HB 1777 strikes an important balance by allowing housing development to move forward while recognizing the real human costs of displacement. The bill requires developers to offer displaced tenants the right of first offer to a comparable unit in the new project and to provide replacement housing payments and clear information about relocation assistance. While we agree that lowering the overall cost of building housing must remain a priority, we also believe that the impacts of displacement should not be ignored or shifted entirely onto tenants. These costs should be acknowledged as part of responsible redevelopment.

We also strongly support the bill's emphasis on communication and transparency. Requiring developers to maintain contact with displaced tenants throughout the redevelopment process helps ensure that tenants understand their rights and are able to



**Hawai'i YIMBY**

Honolulu, HI 96814

[hawaiiyimby.org](http://hawaiiyimby.org)

[info@hawaiiyimby.org](mailto:info@hawaiiyimby.org)

plan for their housing future. These provisions promote housing stability and reduce unnecessary disruption for families and communities.

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

Huey Kwik

Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





Aloha e Representatives, Chair, Vice Chair:

**Support for HB1777**

I am testifying on behalf of Locals In My Backyard (LIMBY) Hawai'i. LIMBY Hawai'i is a hui of concerned kama'āina and kānaka advocating for solutions to our state's housing crisis.

**We strongly support passage of this bill.**

Far too often in the name of more housing we have sacrificed what little naturally affordable housing we have. This puts undue pressure on the poorest families in Hawai'i to support upper middle income earners and, often enough, overseas investors.

This bill promises some small relief for those families who find themselves holding the short end of the stick as this legislature prioritizes a trickle-down theory of housing. We urge you to pass it.

Me ka ha'aha'a  
Makana Hicks-Goo,  
Organizer on behalf of LIMBY Hawai'i





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**The Thirty-Third Legislature  
House Committee on Housing  
Wednesday, February 4, 2026  
Conference Room 430  
9:00 a.m.**

**LATE**

TO: The Honorable Luke A. Evslin, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director  
RE: Support for H.B. 1777 Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Evslin and Members of the Committee:

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director of AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people 50 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 testify on H.B.1777.

**AARP is in strong support of H.B. 1777** which strengthens protections for tenants who are **displaced or evicted** due to redevelopment of housing projects that receive **assistance from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC)**. The bill requires developers to:

- Provide displaced tenants with a **Right of First Offer (RFO)** for a **comparable unit** in the new project.
- Pay each displaced tenant a **replacement housing payment** equal to the **lesser of** three months' rent or three months of rent affordable to a two-person household at **60% AMI**.
- Ensure tenants receive **information and assistance** on relocation and how to exercise their right to return.
- **Track and maintain communication** with tenants starting **120 days before** issuing notices to vacate and continuing through project completion.
- Comply with HHFDC oversight, with penalties for noncompliance including funding delays, halting relocation, withholding disbursements, or ineligibility for HHFDC programs for at least a year.



February 4, 2026

H.B. 1777 AARP Testimony – Strong Support

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Stable and affordable housing is foundational to strong, resilient communities. By supporting this measure, the state can help promote long-term community stability and reduce the significant impact of displacement whether it be due to redevelopment or rising rents. In a report by Smart Growth America for AARP in 2024, it was estimated that between 2031 and 2040, affordability expirations will occur for approximately 5,000 units in Hawai'i. With a little over 50% of these expirations occurring between 2031 and 2035. Should the affordability expire as estimated, Hawai'i will see significant upheaval of numerous individuals and families.

Displacement can be devastating for older adults who rely on proximity to doctors, transit, caregivers, and familiar communities. H.B. 1777 ensures these individuals are **not left behind during redevelopment** by guaranteeing a **right to return** and requiring ongoing communication. Also, by requiring **replacement housing payments** of up to three months' rent, H.B. 1777 provides for assistance to cover moving expenses such as deposits, temporary housing, and movers which can otherwise overwhelm older adults with fixed incomes. The bill mandates structured **communication and tracking**, starting months before displacement. This means tenants get timely notices, clear guidance, and support throughout the entire redevelopment process, reducing stress and confusion. Additionally, the **Right of First Offer** ensures displaced tenants can return to a comparable unit when the project is completed. This preserves community ties and supports aging in place, a top priority for older adults.

AARP requests that the House Committee on Housing pass H.B. 1777.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this important measure.



February 4, 2026

**LATE**

Representative Luke Evslin, Chair  
Representative Tyson Miyake, Vice Chair  
Committee on Housing

RE: **HB 1777- Relating to Housing**  
**Hearing date: Wednesday February 4, 2026 at 9:00AM**

Aloha Chair Evslin, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NAIOP Hawaii with COMMENTS to HB 1777 Relating to the Rental Housing Revolving Fund (RHRF). NAIOP Hawaii represents over 200 industry professionals, including developers, owners, investors, asset managers, lenders, and other stakeholders committed to responsible real estate development in Hawai'i.

HB 1777 requires developers developing an affordable housing project under Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction by requiring the proposed project to offer: 1) tenants the right of first refusal of a comparable unit in the housing project; and 2) provide replacement housing payments at the lesser of three months' rent or an amount equivalent to three months' rent that is affordable to a two-person household at 60% of the applicable AMI. Further the measure establishes procedures to track and maintain communication with those tenants and establishes consequences for a developer's noncompliance.

To be clear NAIOP Hawaii strongly support tenant protections, however, this bill creates unintended financial consequences that may stall housing development, increase project costs, and may ultimately reduce the number of housing units built at all income levels. Many developers already provide robust compensation to those displaced by housing projects. Further, HHFDC and HUD require compensation for their projects. We would recommend that language be included to exempt tenants already receiving assistance through another state or federal program from receiving assistance from this measure.

NAIOP Hawaii remains concerned with the required relocation benefits of no less than three month's rent. The financial compensation provisions require developers to provide three months of comparable rent upfront, which increases project costs and will impact the number of housing units that can be built.

Should the committee elect proceed with the measure, NAIOP Hawaii recommends placing a cap on the three months' rent of compensation that is granted. At a maximum, the

compensation provided should be three months of rent differential equaling the difference between a tenant's rent current at the time of displacement and the cost of rent in a comparable unit within the same district. This prevents a potential windfall and equitably accounts for the tenant's current living costs and the increase in costs associated with displacement.

We urge the committee to reconsider HB1777 and find a solution that protects tenants while ensuring affordable housing projects remain financially viable. We stand ready to collaborate on policies that will truly accelerate affordable housing production and create a sustainable path forward for Hawai'i's residents.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Ken Hayashida, President  
NAIOP Hawaii

**HB-1777**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:20:50 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Will Caron   | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

## Comments:

Please support this critical low-income renter protection. This bill protects residents of 201H projects from displacement by guaranteeing clear communication, relocation assistance, and right to return to comparable affordable housing during redevelopment. This provides predictable protections for resident security as affordable housing is redeveloped, preventing low-income families from slipping through the cracks into homelessness.

**HB-1777**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:54:41 PM

Testimony for HSG on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                   |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| tia pearson  | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

This bill:

- Protects residents from displacement by guaranteeing clear communication, relocation assistance, and right to return to comparable affordable housing during redevelopment.
- Provides predictable protections for resident security.

**HB-1777**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:58:11 AM

Testimony for HSG on 2/4/2026 9:00:00 AM

| Submitted By     | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify                |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Shay Chan Hodges | Individual   | Support            | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill because it:

- Protects residents from displacement by guaranteeing clear communication, relocation assistance, and right to return to comparable affordable housing during redevelopment.
- Provides predictable protections for resident security.

Mahalo!