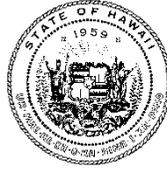


JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



BONNIE KAHAKUI
ADMINISTRATOR
DAYNA OMIYA
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII'
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE
P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
Tel: (808) 586-0554
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<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY
OF
BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR
STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
FINANCE
February 26, 2026, 2:00 PM

HOUSE BILL 2167, HD1
RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2167, HD1, which establishes a pilot program to provide housing assistance for youth experiencing housing instability. The State Procurement Office (SPO) appreciates that the House Draft 1 of this bill incorporates the recommended language that the Office of Youth Services contracts are subject to Chapter 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

This revision preserves the intent of the program while ensuring a fair, open and competitive procurement process pursuant to statutory requirements of Chapter 103F, HRS.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.



Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Commission



Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community

Mailing Address: LGBTQ+ Commission, c/o The Department of Human Services,
P.O. Box 339, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96809-0339

Email: hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com
Web: <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/lgbtq-commission/>

February 24, 2026

House's Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:00 PM

RE: Strong Support for House Bill 2167

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi and fellow committee members,

I am writing in strong support of House Bill 2167 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature to

“improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission offers **strong support** for House Bill 2167, which requires the Hawai'i Office of Youth Services to establish a five-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to contract with nonprofit organizations or execute memoranda of agreement with government agencies to provide direct financial assistance to eligible youth.

Housing stability is foundational to health, safety, education, and long-term self-sufficiency. Yet across our state, too many young people experience housing insecurity and homelessness. [Māhū, LGBTQIA+ and QTPI+](#) youth are disproportionately impacted. National research consistently shows that LGBTQIA+ youth experience higher rates of family rejection, displacement, and homelessness compared to their non-LGBTQIA+ peers. For transgender youth, these risks are even more severe.

In Hawai'i, where the cost of living remains among the highest in the nation, even short-term financial crises can result in eviction, couch surfing, or unsafe living arrangements. Youth exiting foster care, those involved in the juvenile legal system, and youth who have experienced family rejection are especially vulnerable. Without intervention, housing instability can quickly cascade into school disruption, unemployment, exploitation, and involvement with the criminal legal system.

HB 2167 provides a practical, compassionate, and fiscally responsible solution. By empowering the Hawai'i Office of Youth Services to partner with trusted community-based organizations and government agencies, this pilot program leverages existing infrastructure and expertise. Direct financial assistance—whether for rent, security deposits, utilities, or other housing-related costs—can be the difference between stability and homelessness.

Proudly established pursuant to Hawai'i Revised Statutes Chapter 369, as enacted through Act 41, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2022

HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Support of HB 2167

Prevention is more cost-effective than crisis response. The cost of providing modest housing stabilization assistance is significantly lower than the long-term public costs associated with homelessness, emergency healthcare, child welfare involvement, and incarceration. Investing in youth housing stability now reduces downstream burdens on state systems later.

For mähū, LGBTQIA+ and QTPI+ youth in particular, affirming and stable housing environments are life-saving. Housing instability is strongly correlated with increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidality among mähū, LGBTQIA+ and QTPI+ youth. A program that prioritizes stability does more than address housing. It promotes mental health, educational attainment, and workforce participation.

A five-year pilot allows the State to evaluate outcomes, gather data, and refine best practices. It reflects both urgency and accountability. The Commission supports ensuring that data collection includes demographic information, including sexual orientation and gender identity (when voluntarily disclosed and their identity is kept confidential), to better understand disparities and target future resources effectively.

HB 2167 represents a commitment to Hawai'i's youth: that we will not allow temporary financial hardship to permanently derail a young person's future.

For these reasons, the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission respectfully urges the Committee to pass HB 2167.

If you or any member of your staff has any questions regarding my testimony you can reach me at hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Sandy Harjo Livingston (he/him/they/them)
Chair
[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)

[Inclusive LGBTQIA+ Glossary](#)

The [Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#) has this webpage and that is dedicated to understanding and being able to use the correct terms when talking about the rainbow community from mähū to LGBTQIA+ to QTPI+ to MVPFAFF+ and beyond. The list found on this page is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as appropriate.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



LEANNE GILLESPIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LUNA HO'OKELE

Phone: (808) 587-5710
Fax: (808) 587-5734

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
OFFICE OF YOUTH SERVICES
Ke'ena Lawelawe 'Ōpio
1010 Richards Street, Suite 314
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 25, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
The Honorable Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

FROM: Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 2167 HD1, RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026 @ 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) supports this bill and requests clarification. Furthermore, OYS respectfully requests that any appropriation not replace or reduce a priority identified in the executive budget.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this bill requires the Office of Youth Services to establish a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to award funds to certain nonprofit organizations and government agencies to support eligible youth with financial assistance.

The Office of Youth Services appreciates the legislature's ongoing support for young adults faced with challenges that prevent them from being successful. The primary purpose of this program is intersected with the mission of OYS to prevent delinquency and reduce recidivism among juveniles through prevention, rehabilitation, and treatment services.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

OYS requests clarification related to the interpretation of language on page 6, line 4:
“(1) Is between eighteen and twenty-four years of age; and”

This language aligns with Hawaii Revised Statutes Chapter 352D, Office of Youth Services and is interpreted and defined by OYS as an individual who has reached their eighteenth birthday and not reached their twenty-fifth birthday.

OYS respectfully requests that funding for administrative costs and oversight for qualified nonprofit organizations or government agencies awarded these funds be anticipated, appropriately 20% of dispersed public assistance funds, in the fiscal appropriation to carry out this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



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

My name is Patricia “Patty” Chin, and I serve as the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative Manager at EPIC ‘Ohana. Our statewide initiative partners with youth ages 14 to 26 who have experienced foster care. Many of these young people face significant barriers to stable housing as they transition into adulthood, often without the family safety nets their peers rely on. I am submitting testimony in **strong support** of HB2167, which establishes a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program.

Youth with foster care experience are among the highest risk groups for homelessness in the United States. National research from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago’s Voices of Youth Count shows:

- 1 in 3 youth exiting foster care experience homelessness by age 21 (Chapin Hall, 2017).
- Young people who age out of foster care are 2.5 times more likely to experience homelessness than their peers.

We see this reality reflected here in Hawai‘i. According to the 2025 Opportunity Passport Participant Survey, 36.3% of young people in the HI H.O.P.E.S. Match program reported experiencing homelessness within the past six months. This is an alarming indicator of how vulnerable our former foster youth are – even those who are actively engaged in supportive programming.

Housing stability is not just a need – it is one of the core hopes and priorities of the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative. We envision a Hawai‘i where all young people who are currently or formerly in foster care have safe, stable, and affordable housing, and where no youth enter adulthood without a place to call home. HB2167 directly advances this vision.

These vulnerabilities are intensified by Hawai‘i’s high cost of living and limited affordable housing. Local providers consistently report that former foster youth are overrepresented among young people who are couch surfing, sleeping in cars, or entering adult shelters simply to qualify for help. Many are working, in school, or caring for siblings or their own children – but lack the financial buffer to weather a crisis.

We also know that homelessness is not only traumatic, but expensive. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), individuals using emergency shelter or

1130 N. Nimitz Hwy., Ste. C-210 Honolulu, HI 96817
Phone: (808)838 - 7752 | Email: epic@epicohana.org





transitional housing for four to twelve months incur system costs ranging from \$3,103 to \$14,418 per household, with significantly higher costs for families. In Hawai'i, the average cost of an emergency shelter bed exceeded \$27,500 per person per year in 2015, with family shelter costs often surpassing \$80,000 annually (Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness). These costs have only increased with inflation and Hawai'i's high operating expenses. Preventing homelessness upfront, especially youth with foster care experience, is consistently shown to be far more cost effective than responding after a crisis. -effective than responding after a crisis.

As someone who works closely with youth who has experienced foster care and as a former foster youth myself, I know how quickly one unexpected crisis can destabilize a young person's life. Many of the youth we serve are doing everything right. What they lack is not motivation, it is a safety net. HB2167 provides that safety net.

For these reasons, the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative strongly supports HB2167 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this bill. Mahalo, for your time and for your commitment to Hawai'i's youth.

Patricia "Patty" Chin



February 24, 2026

House's Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM

RE: **STRONG SUPPRT for House Bill 2167 HD 1**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi and fellow committee members,

Pride at Work – Hawai'i is an official chapter of [Pride at Work](#) which is a national nonprofit organization that represents LGBTQIA+ union members and their allies. We are an officially recognized constituency group of the AFL-CIO that organizes mutual support between the organized Labor Movement and the LGBTQIA+ Community to further social and economic justice. We write in **strong support of House Bill 2167 HD 1**.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i proudly stands in strong support of House Bill 2167, which requires the Hawai'i Office of Youth Services to establish a five-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to contract with nonprofit organizations and partner with government agencies to provide direct financial assistance to eligible youth.

As the AFL-CIO's constituency group representing māhu and LGBTQIA+ union members and allies, Pride at Work – Hawai'i understands that housing stability is a worker's issue. Safe, stable housing is the foundation that allows young people to finish school, maintain employment, participate in job training, and enter the workforce with dignity.

Too many young people in Hawai'i are one emergency away from homelessness. For māhu, and LGBTQIA+ youth—particularly transgender youth—the risks are even higher due to family rejection, discrimination, and economic marginalization. When a young person loses housing, their education is disrupted, employment becomes unstable, and their long-term earning potential suffers. This is not just a housing issue; it is a workforce development issue.

Hawai'i's labor movement believes in investing upstream. Preventing homelessness through targeted financial assistance—such as help with rent, deposits, utilities, or emergency housing costs—is far more cost-effective than addressing the long-term consequences of instability. A modest, timely intervention can keep a young person housed, employed, and on a path toward self-sufficiency.

This bill wisely empowers the Hawai'i Office of Youth Services to work with community-based partners who already have trusted relationships with youth. Organized labor knows that strong partnerships deliver results. Leveraging nonprofits and public agencies ensures that funds reach youth quickly and effectively.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of Re: HB 2167 HD 1

For young workers and future workers, housing stability is economic justice. Youth who experience homelessness face higher risks of exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and wage theft. Stable housing strengthens their ability to assert their rights, pursue apprenticeships, and join the workforce on equitable footing.

A five-year pilot program provides the opportunity to gather meaningful data, evaluate outcomes, and build a sustainable model that can be expanded statewide. Investing in youth today strengthens Hawai'i's future workforce and reinforces our shared commitment to fairness, opportunity, and dignity for all.

Pride at Work – Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to pass House Bill 2167 HD 1.

In Solidarity,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)
President
[Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)

HB-2167-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:51:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sonia Blackiston	Hawaii Youth Services Network	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Finance Committee members,

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports HB 2167 HD1, which requires the Office of Youth Services to establish a five-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program that will support eligible youth between 18-24 years of age with financial assistance. Young people face heightened risks of homelessness due to multiple factors which are further compounded by the high cost of living in Hawai'i. By providing financial assistance to eligible young people, this program can support and stabilize youth experiencing housing crises and prevent them from facing further homelessness in the future.

HYSN strongly urges this committee to fully support this measure knowing the positive impact this program can have for young people facing housing challenges across the state.

Mahalo for your support,

Sonia Blackiston, Executive Director

Hawaii Youth Services Network

To: House Committee on Finance
Re: **HB2167 HD1 – Relating to Youth Homelessness**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 26, 2026, 2:00 PM

Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2167 HD1**. This bill requires the Office of Youth Services to establish a five-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to enter into contracts with nonprofit organizations or execute memoranda of agreement with government agencies to support eligible youth with financial assistance.

This bill can help prevent long-term homelessness among Hawai'i youth by reaching them before they enter emergency homelessness systems, helping them maintain housing stability, reducing costly use of emergency shelter systems, and improving their long-term outcomes.

As we all know, Hawai'i's homelessness crisis is among the most severe in the United States. In 2024, more than 1,000 youth and young adults across the state were counted as homeless¹ and Hawai'i had the highest homelessness rate in the nation, more than 3.5 times the national average.²

By focusing on young residents who are especially vulnerable – experiencing homelessness, domestic or family violence, or sex trafficking or related exploitation; exiting from the foster care system; or served an eviction notice or otherwise in immediate need of stability – this bill can help keep our young people housed and avoid adding to our homelessness crisis.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Please pass this bill.

Thank you,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ <https://hhdw.org/na-2024-homeless-point-in-time-counts/>

² <https://uhero.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/HawaiiHousingFactbook2025.pdf>



HA'AHEO, 'OHANA, KAULIKE, UI
Pride Family Justice Activate
WHERE PRIDE BECOMES POLITICAL POWER

Website: www.hokupac.org ♦ Email: info@hokupac.org

February 24, 2026

House's Committee on Finance
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for House Bill 2167 HD 1 - RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice-Chair Takenouchi and fellow committee members,

This testimony on behalf of **HOKU PAC**, Hawai'i's LGBTQ+ political action committee dedicated to building queer political power and advancing policies that protect our communities. We write in **strong support of House Bill 2167 House Draft 1**.

HOKU PAC submits this testimony in **strong and urgent support** of House Bill 2167, which requires the Hawai'i Office of Youth Services to establish a five-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to partner with nonprofit organizations and government agencies to provide direct financial assistance to eligible youth.

At its core, HB 2167 is about preventing youth homelessness before it happens. In a state where the cost of living is among the highest in the nation, even a minor financial setback can push a young person into crisis. A missed paycheck, family conflict, medical emergency, or aging out of foster care can quickly result in housing instability that spirals into long-term hardship.

For mähū, LGBTQIA+, and QTPI+ youth, the stakes are even higher. Family rejection, discrimination, and social stigma disproportionately push LGBTQIA+ youth, especially transgender youth, into unsafe housing situations or homelessness. Housing instability significantly increases vulnerability to violence, exploitation, poor mental health outcomes, and disengagement from school and employment.

HB 2167 is a practical and fiscally responsible solution. Direct financial assistance for rent, security deposits, utilities, or other housing-related expenses is a proven strategy to keep young people housed. The cost of prevention is far lower than the long-term public costs of homelessness, emergency services, foster care re-entry, or incarceration.

The bill's structure is sound. By empowering the Hawai'i Office of Youth Services to contract with trusted community-based organizations and execute memoranda of agreement with public agencies, the State can move resources quickly to youth who need them most. Community

Paid for by HOKU PAC – Not Authorized by any Candidate or Candidate Committee

HOKU PAC Testimony in support of HB 2167 HD 1: RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

partners are best positioned to provide culturally competent, trauma-informed support—particularly for LGBTQ+ youth and other marginalized young people.

HOKU PAC believes that government has a responsibility to protect vulnerable communities and invest in preventive solutions. A five-year pilot program provides sufficient time to measure outcomes, collect meaningful data, and refine best practices while addressing an urgent and ongoing crisis.

Housing stability is not a luxury. It is the foundation upon which education, employment, health, and civic participation are built. By passing HB 2167, the Legislature affirms that Hawai'i will not allow young people's futures to be derailed by short-term financial hardship.

HOKU PAC respectfully urges the Committee to pass House Bill 2167.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

SUPPORT HB 2167 HD1: RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TO: House Committee on Finance
FROM: Shellie Niles, Vice President of Mission, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Thursday, 02/26/26; 2:00pm; CR 308 & Videoconference

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee on Finance:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports HB 2167 HD1**, which establishes a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program under the Office of Youth Services. This measure fills a critical gap by providing urgently needed financial support to young adults ages 18–25 who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability—including youth exiting foster care, fleeing unsafe environments, or couch surfing. These young people often fall outside eligibility criteria for existing housing programs and remain at high risk of long-term homelessness without targeted intervention.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i is a community-based, tax-exempt organization that has served Hawai'i for 78 years. Across our statewide programs, we work with individuals and families facing poverty, trauma, and housing instability. Many of the young adults who would benefit from this pilot first entered our services as minors during periods of significant crisis. When they turn eighteen, they frequently lose essential child-focused supports and must suddenly navigate adult systems without the skills, stability, or judgment fully developed. CCH continues to assist many of these youth as they transition into early adulthood, giving us direct insight into both the barriers they face and the proven effectiveness of coordinated case management and housing supports.

The ability to provide flexible financial assistance alongside supportive services during this pivotal transition period is key to preventing homelessness and promoting long-term self-sufficiency. Catholic Charities Hawai'i respectfully urges the House Finance Committee to pass HB 2167 HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued leadership. If you have any questions, please contact Shellie Niles, Vice President of Mission, at (808) 527-4813.



HB-2167-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 9:38:02 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Golojuch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in full support of helping our homeless children.

HB-2167-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 12:37:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Even	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2167.

Tina Marie Even

HB-2167-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 2:21:26 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support HB2167. I'm on the board of Rainbow Family 808. Weekly, we take food, mainly milk, other dairy products, fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, and other items for the homeless youth at Residential Youth Services and Empowerment (RYSE). We also provided items to Youth Outreach.

From many discussions with various groups and individuals, I know there is a definite need to expand current assistance to homeless youth. We do not want these kids to be victims of sex trafficking or other undesirable consequences of being homeless.

It is important to please pass this bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

Board Member/Secretary, Rainbow Family 808

Judith F. Clark
48-218 Kamehameha Highway
808-499-9966
Judithforceclark@gmail.com
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

February 24, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Finance

Testimony in Support of HB 2167 HD 1 Relating to Youth Homelessness

As a community advocate, youth homelessness service provider for 25 years, and a person with lived experience of young adult homelessness, I strongly support HB 2167 HD 1.

When I was 20, I was laid off from work and could not pay the rent on my apartment. It was a miserable and terrifying time. I was hungry and cold. I was afraid of being assaulted or raped. When an elderly friend allowed me to sleep on the floor of his senior living apartment, I knew that he was not allowed to have overnight visitors, and that I was jeopardizing his housing.

I was fortunate. Within 2 months, I found another job and my homeless experience ended. Rent support for those 2 months would have made a huge difference in my life.

In Hawaii, the gap between what young adults can afford, and the actual cost of housing is huge. One unexpected medical bill or car repair bill can be the tipping point into homelessness. A small amount of assistance now can prevent years of dependence on public assistance and long-term homelessness.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH

TO: Committee on Finance
Rep. Chris Todd, Chair
Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee

HEARING: Thursday, February 26, 2026
2:00 PM
Conference Room 308

FROM: Sharla-Ann Houlding

RE: Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2167, HD1 – Relating to Youth Homelessness

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

My name is Sharla-Ann Houlding. I am the Supervisor for the HI H.O.P.E.S. Initiative, whose mission is to educate, advocate and collaborate for improvements to the foster care system and promote better outcomes for youth in foster care. I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of HB2167, HD1, which establishes a five-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program within the Department of Human Services' Office of Youth Services to provide rapid, flexible financial assistance to young people experiencing housing instability and homelessness.

Youth and young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 are facing unique challenges in their transition to adulthood, often without financial stability or the necessary support systems needed for them to thrive. It's a well-known fact that the price of housing and the cost of living in Hawai'i are among the highest in the nation. The average two-bedroom rental averages around \$2,400 to \$2,600 per month on O'ahu to about \$2,900 in Kailua-Kona where I live. The affordability gap is increasing with each passing day, forcing kama'aina with several generations of ties to Hawai'i to move to the continental United States because they cannot afford to pay rent here. Among many of the people who are migrating out of Hawai'i are Native Hawaiians who are forced to not only abandon their ancestral homeland but their cultural ties as well.

Over the last 17 years of my career working with youth transitioning from foster care into adulthood, I have witnessed first-hand the heartbreaking struggle this population goes through with not being able to afford safe and stable housing that they can call their own. More often than not, after aging out of foster care, they are forced to move out of their foster home and have to either move back in with the biological family from which they were removed from in the first place, cohabitate with a partner, couch surf at a friend's house, live out of their car (if they are lucky enough to have one), or live in a tent on the side of the road or at the beach. Experiences such as this retraumatize them and leave them vulnerable to exploitation, early parenting, incarceration, substance use, overdependence on the welfare system, and lead to long-term cycles of housing instability.

Preventing homelessness for youth ages 18 to 24, especially those who are aging out of the foster care system, is our collective kuleana (responsibility). Youth and young adults enter foster care because a legal caretaker failed to provide the basic necessities of life—safety and stability. We need to do better if we want to help them break generational cycles of abuse.

Though it may seem like a hefty investment, preventative measures are shown to reduce the overall financial burden on the government. By providing flexible and rapid financial assistance to youth ages 18 to 24 over the course of five years for anything housing-related, we can help decrease the number of youth sleeping in homeless shelters or on the streets and increase their likelihood of achieving gainful employment and/or a college education. When youth don't have to worry about their housing stability, they can focus on setting and achieving their goals towards financial stability and independence.

This targeted stabilization approach has the potential to support the hundreds of youth aging out of care every year in Hawai'i. This measure can provide a layer of protection and support for this high-risk, high-need population as they are facing the most critical period of development in life. When youth have stable housing conditions, they can thrive. And when youth in Hawai'i thrive, everyone in Hawai'i thrives.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB2167, HD1, as this represents a thoughtful, evidence-informed, and fiscally responsible investment in Hawai'i's young people. By preventing homelessness before it occurs, this measure will reduce long-term system costs, improve outcomes for vulnerable youth, and strengthen and stabilize communities across the State of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and for the opportunity to testify.

With my deepest gratitude and aloha,
Sharla-Ann Houlding, LCSW

HB-2167-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 7:14:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noelle Lindenmann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee -

I am submitting testimony today in strong support of HB2167. All of our keiki should be supported, regardless of age or housing status.

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Noelle Lindenmann, Kailua-Kona

February 26th 2026
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Miala Matsumoto
Testimony in support of Bill HB2167

Dear Dear Chairmen Chris Todd and the Committee of Finances

My name is Miala Matsumoto and I was born and raised in Oahu, Hawaii. I am a social working student at the University of Hawaii at Manoa whose goal is to eventually work with youth homelessness and mental health. I am writing to you to support Bill HB2167 a bill that creates a five year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program. The pilot program would work with nonprofit organizations to give financial support and to prevent homelessness to youth adolescents between the ages of 18-24

This bill is an important bill because it focuses on one of the biggest issues in Hawaii which is youth homelessness. During the ages 18-24 the youth graduate high school and some move out, some go to college, some enter the workforce but at the same time these youth are learning to navigate adulthood. In reality many of us 18-24 year olds can't afford the high cost of living in Hawaii. This program would give the youth that step in the world and hopefully help them out of these homeless shelters and gain their independence. I currently volunteer with RYSE which is a youth homeless shelter and outreach program and there are many kids out there who struggle with mental health issues and just need the extra help to get their start in the world. This bill helps outline that youth homelessness is not only an economical issue but it also makes you see how important development is during this time. This bill would use early intervention methods and prevention methods instead of just crisis responses. Taking the time to invest in housing stability for these youth will help with their mental health, get rid of their trauma and even have long term outcomes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Miala Matsumoto