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STATE OF HAWAII OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

February 12, 2026

Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender, State of Hawai'i to the House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

H.B. 2167: RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee:

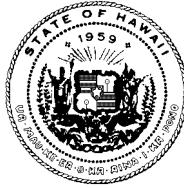
The Office of the Public Defender **strongly supports H.B. 2167**.

The Office of the Public Defender works with youth involved in the criminal justice system. Youth include juveniles, teenagers and emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 25. We have seen an increase in youth between the ages of 18 and 25 experiencing homelessness. We agree that we can do better as a community to help and support these youth experiencing homelessness across the State of Hawaii.

Our homeless youth need help with basic needs, access to education, access to transportation, access to mental health services, access to a safe and secure place to live, access to substance abuse treatment, and access to basic health care. Our homeless youth are more vulnerable to trafficking, sexual assault, exposure to illegal drugs and alcohol, at risk for substance abuse, access to proper health care, including access to mental health services. We strongly support the creation of a 2-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to help address some of these issues and to help support our youth to achieve safety and stability, to prevent or alleviate homelessness, and to help them thrive and become productive members of our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



LEANNE GILLESPIE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
LUNA HO'OKALE

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

February 11, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
The Honorable Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Leanne Gillespie, Executive Director

SUBJECT: HB 2167, RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Hearing: Thursday, February 12, 2026 @ 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Office of Youth Services (OYS) appreciates the intent of this bill, provides comments, and respectfully requests clarifications. Further, 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' primary purpose is to prevent delinquency and reduce recidivism among juveniles through prevention, rehabilitation, and treatment services. OYS serves youth ages 14 through 24 years of age and, among others, provides Safe Spaces emergency shelters and other residential services to youth through contracts with community-

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

based agencies. OYS has not previously provided direct cash financial assistance to individuals or procured contracts to implement such assistance.

OYS seeks clarification on several components of this bill. First, the bill requires OYS (page 5, lines 12-13) "to award funds to qualified nonprofit organizations or government agencies..." OYS seeks clarification on the definition and intent of "award". If the intent is for the pilot program to function as a grant, OYS suggests that the Chapter 42F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, process may be better suited to establishing a small 2-year pilot program. If the intent is for OYS to contract services with nonprofit organizations to provide financial assistance, such services would require compliance with the State's procurement laws and be conducted through the Request for Proposal process. As OYS does not generally contract for this kind of financial assistance benefit program, OYS would require an additional FTE with the requisite experience and knowledge. Additionally, this pilot will require additional time to develop, draft, and procure services. If the intent is for OYS to provide funds to other government agencies serving young adults, OYS would prefer that funds be provided directly to those existing government programs rather than requiring OYS administer a pass-through.

Second, OYS requests clarification on the population of young adults to be served by the pilot. OYS is authorized to serve "young adults at risk" between the ages of 18 and 24 as defined as including age 18 and through age 24 years, and the bill includes the pilot age of 25. Additionally, OYS requests clarification on the geographic areas the bill intends to serve, as the pilot's two-year timeframe will make statewide implementation difficult. Importantly, OYS requests the number of young adults the bill intends to serve annually. The targeted number would help determine the general fund appropriations needed; currently, OYS has no available state or federal funds to support the proposed effort.

Third, this bill seeks to reduce reliance on emergency shelters, lessen the strain on state-funded services, and support healthier long-term outcomes for Hawaii's emerging adults. With

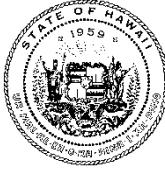
this in mind, OYS requests guidance on the specific outcomes that will define the project's success.

OYS expresses concerns regarding its ability to monitor and account for public funds dispersed through this project. Currently, OYS lacks the capacity, expertise, or IT system to ensure that dispersed cash assistance reaches the intended or approved recipient. OYS also expresses concern about any unintended consequences or negative impact this project and the funds received by individuals may have on their eligibility for other benefits or financial assistance they may be receiving.

OYS respectfully requests that funding for administrative costs and oversight for qualified nonprofit organizations or government agencies awarded these funds be anticipated in the fiscal appropriation to carry out this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

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



BONNIE KAHAKUI
ADMINISTRATOR
DAYNA OMIYA
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I

STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

P.O. Box 119
Honolulu, Hawaii 96810-0119
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email: state.procurement.office@hawaii.gov
<http://spo.hawaii.gov>

TESTIMONY OF BONNIE KAHAKUI, ADMINISTRATOR STATE PROCUREMENT OFFICE

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS
February 12, 2026, 10:30 AM

HOUSE BILL 2167 RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on House Bill 2167, which establishes a pilot program to provide housing assistance for youth experiencing housing instability. The State Procurement Office (SPO) appreciates the intent of this bill and respectfully recommends the following revision to SECTION 2, Page 5, Lines 12-17.

" (b) The office of youth services shall award funds, pursuant to chapter 103F, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to qualified nonprofit organizations or government agencies that provide services to eligible youth, as determined by the office, for the purpose of carrying out the youth housing stability assistance pilot program with the nonprofit organization's or government agency's clients. "

Furthermore, the SPO recommends the Department of Human Services apply the cost principles outlined in Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) Chapter 103F and Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) §3-141-402 to promote fair, accountable, and transparent distribution of assistance. The cost principles establish standards for reasonableness, ensuring expenditures are proportionate to the service provided and reflect prudent stewardship of public funds; allocability, requiring costs be clearly linked to specific program activities that advance the intended social outcome; and allowability of funds, ensuring the distributed funds are permitted under statute.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKALE

LATE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKALE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
Office of the Director
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TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKALE

February 11, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness
Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions

SUBJECT: **HB2167 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: February 12, 2026, Time 10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

AGENCY'S POSITION:

The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions submits comments on HB2167, which requires the Office of Youth Services to establish a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to provide rapid, flexible financial stabilization assistance to eligible youth ages eighteen to twenty-five.

HB2167 establishes a pilot program within the Department of Human Services' Office of Youth Services to provide immediate, youth-centered financial assistance to young adults experiencing housing instability following a qualifying adverse life event. Eligible youth may receive up to \$10,000 in assistance, disbursed rapidly to address urgent housing-related needs such as rent, deposits, utilities, transportation, food, and other basic necessities.

SOHHS appreciates the intent of the bill as prevention and rapid stabilization are critical components of Hawai'i's homelessness response system, particularly for emerging adults who often lack a financial safety net. Without timely intervention, short-term housing instability can quickly escalate into prolonged homelessness and increased reliance on emergency shelter

systems.

SOHHS respectfully defers to the Department of Human Services' Office of Youth Services regarding administration of funds, program design, and implementation considerations under this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Aloha,

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. -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:-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.

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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 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

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To: House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness
Re: **HB2167 – Relating to Youth Homelessness**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
February 12, 2026, 10:30 AM

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB2167**. 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.

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>

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai‘i

K A W A I L O A

February 12, 2026

House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Hearing Time: 10:30 AM

Location: State Capitol Conference Room 329

Re: HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness - **Support**

Aloha e Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai‘i hui, we submit this testimony in strong support of HB 2167, which 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.

Stable housing is foundational to youth well-being, educational attainment, workforce participation, and overall health. Yet too many of the young people we serve experience housing instability at critical transition points in their lives, aging out of foster care, exiting the juvenile legal system, or navigating family conflict and economic hardship. A Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program would provide flexible, timely support that meets youth where they are and prevents deeper system involvement. By partnering with trusted community-based organizations, the State can ensure funds are distributed efficiently and in culturally responsive ways that reflect the realities young people face.

The Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai‘i hui is a collaboration of nonprofit partners co-located at the Kawaiola Youth and Family Wellness Center since 2018. OYAH's culturally rooted, therapeutic programs support youth to connect to community resources and mentors, find their purpose, and thrive. Many youth come to Kawaiola seeking to overcome the negative impacts of inequitable systems of housing, education, health, child welfare, and justice. OYAH partners (RYSE, Kinai 'Eha, and Partners in Development Foundation) offer tailored programming for individual youth's needs. OYAH has worked closely with State agency partners, legislators, and policy leaders toward a shared goal: to replace punitive policies and practices with restorative and healing-centered approaches rooted in indigenous knowledge systems.

Together, we are creating a pu'uhonua, or place of peace and healing, for youth, staff, and partners.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:05:39 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds and committee members,

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) strongly supports HB 2167, requiring the Office of Youth Services to establish a two-year Youth Stability Assistance Pilot Program.

Every October, HYSN, in coordination with volunteers and other partner agencies, hosts the Hawai'i Children and Youth Summit, an event where youth from across the state come to the capital and work together to brainstorm 10 legislative priorities they want to see Hawai'i's Legislature address in the following Session. 144 youth registered for HCYS 2025. The topics of the breakout discussion groups included Homelessness and Housing, Health, Education, Community Connectedness and Environment.

This year, one of the top recommendations from the Housing and Homelessness group was for the Legislature to provide subsidies or financial assistance for youth facing homelessness. Facilitated by members of the Oahu Youth Advisory Board (OYAB), this group emphasized the need for preventive measures to support youth who are facing homelessness, especially those about to age out of the foster care system.

HB 2167 directly addresses the concerns, recommendations and priorities of the local youth who participated in HCYS, as well as the OYAB facilitators (this bill is one of OYAB's legislative priorities for 2026). We urge you to support this important measure that will have a profound impact on the lives of the youth that this pilot program will support.

Mahalo for your support,

Sonia Blackiston

Executive Director

Hawaii Youth Services Network



LATE

February 11, 2026

O'ahu Youth Action Board

Est. 2017

Co-Chair
Efren Berrones
Co-Chair
Jean Grey
Vice Chair
Vu Dang
Treasurer
Holli-Jae Macanas
Community Engagement Officer
Koda Daily

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Efren Berrones- Co-Chair of O'ahu Youth Action Board, Partners In Care (PIC)

Hearing: February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM

Chair Martin, Vice Chair Olds,, and Members of the House Committees on Human Services and Homelessness

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Efren Berrones, and I serve as the Chair of the O'ahu Youth Action Board (OYAB). OYAB is a designated board composed of youth with lived experience of homelessness on O'ahu, advocating for policy changes that directly impact houseless young people. We firmly believe that any decisions affecting us must include our voices, perspectives, and lived experiences.

As costs rise, food becomes more expensive, and housing feels like a distant dream, our young people are living on the edge. One unexpected expense, one lost job, one eviction notice—and everything falls apart. The need to invest in prevention has never been greater, and the consequences of inaction have never been clearer.

Hawai'i is already facing a crisis. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2023 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, Hawaii had the third-highest rate of homeless youth staying in unsheltered locations. But the crisis extends far beyond one night in January. Research shows that half of adults experiencing chronic homelessness were first homeless before age 25. That means when we fail to intervene for young people, we are not just failing them today—we are setting them on a path toward long-term homelessness that will follow them into adulthood.

Now is the time for the state to invest in our communities, not pull away. Now is the time to be bold.

HB 2167 establishes a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to provide direct financial assistance to youth experiencing homelessness. This is not an experiment—it is a proven intervention. Programs like this have been piloted in seven other states with remarkable results. Nine out of ten young people who received direct financial assistance reported being stably housed one month later, and 85% of youth were still housed 6 months after receiving the intervention. In Oregon, 94% of participants were still housed by the end of two years, and the intervention was so successful that they are launching it statewide. Direct financial assistance works because it addresses the barrier that matters most: money. It gives young people the resources they need to stabilize before a crisis becomes homelessness.

The state has a choice. Invest now in prevention, or pay more later in emergency services, shelters, and the long-term costs of chronic homelessness. Our young people deserve better. They deserve a state that shows up for them when it matters most.

We urge you to pass HB 2167 and give Hawai'i's youth a real chance at housing stability.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to Hawai'i's youth.

With Aloha,

Efren Berrones

Efren Berrones
Co-Chair, O'ahu Youth Action Board
efrenb@partnersincareoahu.org

LATE



POINT SOURCE YOUTH

215 Park Avenue South, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10003

anjala@pointsourceyouth.org

**Testimony in Support of HB 2167
Relating to Youth Homelessness**

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

My name is Anjala Huff, and I am the VP, Direct Cash Transfers at **Point Source Youth (PSY)**. I am writing in strong support of **HB 2167**, which represents a critical step toward preventing and ending youth homelessness in Hawai‘i.

Point Source Youth is a national nonprofit organization working in the movement to prevent and end youth homelessness. We partner with local community-based organizations to implement our evidence- based direct cash transfer (DCT) programs, provide technical assistance and staff training, conduct research and evaluation, and support fundraising and partnership development.

For Hawai‘i, where housing costs are among the highest in the nation and youth homelessness remains a persistent challenge, this bill reflects a compassionate and evidence-based approach to a problem that affects not only the wellbeing of our young people, but the social and economic health of the entire state.

The bill rightly recognizes that youth ages 18–25 face disproportionate risk of housing instability and homelessness. Many young people who are unsafely or unstably housed experience trauma, exploitation, and disruption of education and workforce pathways. We have to acknowledge that youth homelessness is not just a housing issue — it is a public health crisis but intervening early can help keep vulnerable youth from cycling through crisis systems and becoming isolated from community and opportunity. **Helping before a youth becomes chronically homeless dramatically improves long-term outcomes in health, employment, and community engagement.**

HB 2167 aligns with our evidence-based approach by supporting innovative, youth-centered housing interventions that can reduce the number of young people entering the homelessness system, improve long-term outcomes in employment and education, and decrease reliance on costly emergency services.



POINT SOURCE YOUTH
215 Park Avenue South, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10003
anjala@pointsourceyouth.org

Hawai'i cannot afford to overlook its young people. Youth homelessness is preventable. The data shows that relatively modest, targeted investments can produce transformative results.

On behalf of Point Source Youth, I **respectfully but urgently ask you to pass HB 2167.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your commitment to Hawai'i's youth.

Anjala Huff
Vice President, Direct Cash Transfers
Point Source Youth

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

LATE

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 3:36:37 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Support.

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:13:41 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KODA DAILY	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

My name is Asheemo “Koda” Daily, and I am testifying in strong support of HB 2167. I am 23 years old, and I experienced houselessness from the ages of 16 to 22.

Both of my parents worked very hard, but my mom struggled with addiction, which made it difficult for her to support me during my adolescence. As a result, I often had to rely on friends for a place to stay. At one point, my theatre teacher even opened their home to me so I would have somewhere safe to sleep.

Before I was able to access more stable housing, I had to stay in dangerous and unstable places just to afford something cheaper while I worked full time as a homeless outreach worker with the Hawai‘i Health and Harm Reduction Center. Even while doing the work to help others off the street, I was still struggling to find security for myself.

That is the reality for many young people here in Hawai‘i. Youth like me are working, going to school, and doing everything we can to build a future, but we still face major barriers to stable housing. Programs like the Point Source Youth pilot could make the difference between years of instability and an early path to security.

If a program like this had existed when I was 18, I likely would have found stability much sooner. Instead of spending years couch surfing or living in unsafe environments, I could have focused on my education, career, and personal growth.

Please pass HB 2167. This bill will help youth find stability earlier and prevent them from ending up on the streets or in dangerous situations. It gives young people a real chance to build safe, stable futures here at home.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

H.B. No. 2167
RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.

FEBRUARY 12, 2026
10:30 AM VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

I am writing in strong support of HB 2167, which proposes creating a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program through the Office of Youth Services. This important initiative will provide much-needed financial assistance to eligible youth by partnering with nonprofit organizations and government agencies.

Youth homelessness is a growing concern in our community, and the lack of stable housing puts young people at significant risk for negative outcomes, including poor health, interrupted education, and exposure to unsafe environments. By establishing this pilot program, the state demonstrates a commitment to addressing these urgent needs and supporting some of our most vulnerable residents.

The flexibility of the pilot program allows for tailored support, meeting youth where they are and providing direct assistance that can make an immediate difference. Partnering with nonprofits and local agencies ensures that funds are distributed efficiently by those with experience and established relationships in the community. This collaborative approach increases the likelihood of positive, long-term outcomes for the youth who participate.

I urge the committee to pass HB 2167 and help ensure that all young people in Hawaii have the resources and support they need to find safe, stable housing and build brighter futures.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this important bill.

Respectfully,
May Rose Pangayan
MSW Student at University of Hawaii , Manoa

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 10:05:20 PM

Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dana Keawe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB2167

Dana Keawe

Moku O Keawe

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:09:13 PM
Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angelo Ian Bella	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Angelo Ian Bella and I am currently a student in the Master's of Social Work Program at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. I will be submitting support of HB2167, which is in relation to Youth Homelessness and proposes for the creation of a youth housing assistance program by the Department of Human Services. The bill highlights key vulnerabilities that are shared by youth as they experience shifts in their lives, as well as heightened risks for youth that experience traumatic events such as sexual and domestic violence, homelessness, and overall instability.

Housing assistance would provide stability for our most vulnerable youth and would help serve as a crucial step in overcoming adversity that they may be experiencing. Studies have shown that housing assistance increases safety, favorable health outcomes, food security, and better behaviors. The proposal also includes assistance in additional expenses such as food, basic needs, etc. which are key towards building up the population. As the youth serves as the future, it is essential that all youth are able to receive equitable assistance and be given the chance to prosper.

Another crucial aspect of the bill is the infrastructure and positive systems that will be created for houseless youth to follow. As homelessness is a deeply rooted and complex issue that involves internal and external factors, having a system to follow that is trustworthy would greatly benefit the targeted population.

Additionally, I suggest that funds are also allocated towards services that would help the youth- such as case managers, social workers, and counselors. As many houseless youth may experience disparities in emotional and relational needs, having services that are meant to instill guidance and belief in them, as well as cultivate their humanity, would be key in helping the program succeed.

I am grateful for the opportunity to express my support for HB2167, and I trust that, if passed, many great accomplishments towards aiding one of our most vulnerable populations will be made.

Thank you,

Angelo Ian Bella, BSW

Judith F. Clark
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February 11, 2026

To: Representative Lisa Marten, Chair,
And members of the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

Testimony in Support of HB 2167 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.

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 ended my homeless experience. 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

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:59:08 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donna Manibog	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

As an individual citizen, I strongly support HB2167, which establishes a Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program. Young adults ages 18–25 face significant barriers to securing stable housing in Hawai'i. Without support, many are at risk of homelessness during this critical transition to independence.

Providing flexible, short-term financial assistance can prevent housing crises before they occur. Investing in prevention is both compassionate and cost-effective, helping young people remain stable, employed, and connected to their communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge you to pass HB2167.

Respectfully,

Donna Manibog

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:18:06 AM
Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Alimoot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. 2167.

I am writing in support of this measure because I have seen firsthand how quickly a young person in Hawai‘i can fall from stable to crisis.

In Hawai‘i, where rent for a single room can exceed a young person’s entire monthly paycheck, those challenges are magnified. For youth exiting foster care, fleeing domestic violence, recovering from exploitation, or aging out of systems of care, there is often no family safety net. There may be no one to co-sign a lease, no one to cover a deposit, and no one to bridge the gap between jobs.

I have worked with young adults who were one unexpected car repair away from losing employment. Young adults and young parents who were unable to secure housing despite working full-time. Young people students couch surfing because they were told they were not literally homeless and therefore did not qualify for help.

Too often, our systems require young people to hit rock bottom before they become eligible for support.

H.B. 2167 wisely shifts the focus from reaction to prevention.

The proposed Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program reflects what research consistently shows. Modest, flexible financial assistance delivered quickly can prevent long-term homelessness. A single stabilization payment, whether for rent, utilities, childcare, or transportation, can preserve employment, maintain enrollment in school, and prevent entry into the shelter system.

I also appreciate that this bill centers youth dignity and autonomy. It allows funds to be administered through trusted nonprofit and government partners. It permits case-by-case determination of need. It does not create burdensome service requirements beyond a stabilization conversation. It recognizes that young adults are capable and that sometimes what they need most is a timely bridge.

Importantly, this program acknowledges those who are unstably housed, including youth who are couch surfing, doubled up, or temporarily staying in unsafe situations, before they enter formal

homelessness systems. These young people are often invisible in counts and ineligible for assistance until their situation worsens.

H.B. 2167 represents a thoughtful, data-informed, and community-grounded strategy to interrupt the pipeline into chronic homelessness for Hawai‘i’s emerging adults. It invests in stability at the precise moment it matters most.

I respectfully urge your support of this measure.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-2167

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:55:08 AM

Testimony for HSH on 2/12/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristi Kekoa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support for this bill.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

LATE

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Bameron Emilio

Hearing: February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Bameron Emilio, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

No young person should have to go through that. And the truth is, many of us did not have to. We were not that far from stability—we just needed help at the right moment.

HB 2167 is about stopping that from happening. It gives young people the financial assistance they need before a crisis becomes homelessness. It keeps them from experiencing the trauma that so many of us have lived through. Programs like this have worked in seven other states, with 9 out of 10 young people staying stably housed after receiving help. Prevention works. And it is so much better than waiting until someone is already homeless to step in.

I am here today because I do not want other young people to go through what I went through. HB 2167 can stop that.

I urge you to pass HB 2167 and invest in prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM : Benjamin Taulung

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Benjamine Taulung, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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I urge you to pass HB 2167 and invest in prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Ikaika Kaleikini

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Ikaika Kaleikini, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Leo Kristoph

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Leo Kristoph, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Rommy Espin

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Rommy Espin, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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I am here today because I do not want other young people to go through what I went through. HB 2167 can stop that.

I urge you to pass HB 2167 and invest in prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Sinai Louis

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Sinai Louis, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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I am here today because I do not want other young people to go through what I went through. HB 2167 can stop that.

I urge you to pass HB 2167 and invest in prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Syress Nakatani

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Syress Nakatani, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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I am here today because I do not want other young people to go through what I went through. HB 2167 can stop that.

I urge you to pass HB 2167 and invest in prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration.

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2167 Relating to Youth Homelessness

TO: House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness

FROM: Syless Nakatani

Hearing: **February 12th, 2026 10:30 AM**

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 2167, Relating to Youth Homelessness.

My name is Syless Nakatani, and I am a member of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am submitting this testimony as an individual with lived experience of homelessness, and I am here to tell you that this bill matters.

Homelessness is trauma. It is not knowing where you will sleep tonight. It is the fear, the shame, the constant uncertainty. It is missing out on being a young person because you are too busy trying to survive. And once you experience it, it stays with you—even after you find housing, the fear of losing it again never really goes away.

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I am here today because I do not want other young people to go through what I went through. HB 2167 can stop that.

I urge you to pass HB 2167 and invest in prevention.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Testimony in Support of HB 2167 - Related to Youth Homelessness - Submitted by Holli-Jae Macanas

To: House of Representatives
From: Holli-Jae Macanas
Date: Thursday February 12, 2026
Re: Relating to Youth Homelessness

LATE

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Human Services and Homelessness, my name is Holli-Jae Macanas. I am a mother, a community member, and a representative of the O'ahu Youth Action Board. I am here today in support of House Bill 2167, which establishes a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program within the Office of Youth Services. This program would provide funding to nonprofit organizations and government agencies to offer financial assistance to eligible youth.

Young people between the ages of 18 and 25 often need additional support as they transition from homelessness to stable, independent living. Without timely assistance, many youth experience ongoing housing instability and face increased risks of exploitation, abuse, substance use, and long-term hardship. Early intervention is critical to preventing these outcomes.

At the age of 22, I made the decision to leave my parents' home and become independent. During my first year on my own, I relied on temporary housing, staying with family and friends. Although I enrolled in a bachelor's degree program, I had to withdraw in order to work full-time and support myself. With assistance from nonprofit organizations and community resources, I was able to develop a plan for stability and independence. That support played a vital role in helping me move toward self-sufficiency.

This pilot program would provide similar support to youth who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Stable housing assistance during this critical stage of life can improve long-term outcomes. Funding would also strengthen the capacity of nonprofit organizations and local agencies to provide coordinated services. Without support, vulnerable youth face higher risks of unemployment, poor health, and involvement with the justice system—outcomes that result in greater long-term costs to the state. Investing in housing stability can reduce reliance on emergency services and strengthen our communities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support and pass House Bill 2167. This pilot program is a practical investment in Hawai'i's youth and in our state's future. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.

Testimony in Strong Support of HB 2167

Dear Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Committee Members,

LATE

I am writing in strong support of HB 2167, which proposes the creation of a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program through the Office of Youth Services. This critical initiative will provide much-needed financial assistance to eligible youth through partnerships with nonprofit organizations and government agencies, helping to ensure they have access to safe and stable housing.

I currently serve as a Case Manager with Maui Youth & Family Services, working primarily with former foster youth who have aged out of care at 18. Over the past 15 years, I have witnessed firsthand the significant challenges these young adults face as they transition into independence. Far too many experience homelessness immediately upon leaving foster care. Without family or other support systems to rely on, many are forced to sleep on couches, in cars, or on the streets.

This period of transition is particularly vulnerable. Youth experiencing homelessness face heightened risks of sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, assault, and exposure to substance use. The lack of stable housing often creates barriers to employment, education, and overall well-being.

Conversely, when basic needs, especially housing, are secured, these young people are far more likely to succeed. Programs such as Imua Kakou, which I help support as a case manager, provide guidance in education, employment, and life skills. However, housing affordability remains the most significant obstacle to their stability. When youth are able to obtain stable housing, I have seen them thrive, earning college degrees, securing meaningful employment, and building independent, productive lives.

HB 2167 represents a practical and compassionate solution that addresses the root cause of instability for this population. By investing in housing support, we are investing in their long-term success and well-being.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 2167 and help ensure that all young people in Hawai'i have the resources and support they need to secure safe, stable housing and build brighter futures.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this important bill.

Respectfully,
Eva Rickord, MA
Case Manager
Maui Youth & Family Services