

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2545  
A BILL RELATING TO VETERANS

PRESENTATION TO  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

BY

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February 4, 2026, 1:01 PM

Conference Room 225

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Members of the Committee

I am Tommy Driskill and I am testifying in strong **SUPPORT** of SB 2545.

Based upon my past years of experience as President/CEO, Hawaii Health Systems Corp (HHSC) Aug 1997 to Dec 2009, during which time I oversaw the planning, construction, opening and initial operation of the Yukio Okutsu State Veterans Home, Hilo and my work representing Director, Office of Veterans Services, DOD, SOH, interest in both the construction of the Daniel K. Akaka State Veterans Home (DKA SVH), Kapolei 2021 through 2024 as well as planning and design preparation for our new 3d Hawaii State Veterans Home (HI SVH) Maui 2025, I feel uniquely qualified to strongly **SUPPORT** this legislation.

The proposed amendment to Section 3 of SLH 2024 Act 99 as reads "No later than June 30, 2027" change to read "As soon as practicable" will enable this important project to continue moving forward without time constraints, while simultaneously affording an extended opportunity for the formulation of a state agency having a Maui affiliation which is capable of fulfilling both ownership and operational oversight responsibilities for the new HI SVH Maui.

I do not see any conflict between the provisions of this bill and the Executive Budget, but I must base my strong **SUPPORT** on provision that its passage does not ultimately replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation which we strongly support on behalf of both our Maui Veterans and our State-wide Hawaii Veterans, their families and our Gold Star Parents.

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February 4, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair  
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB2557 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

**Hearing:** February 4, 2026, Time 1:01 p.m.  
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

**AGENCY'S POSITION:** The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments. The purpose of this bill is to clarify reporting duties and responsibilities for SOHHS relating to: the number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness; the number of people placed into permanent housing arrangements; additional information regarding Kauhale project contracts and plans or proposals to enhance the Kauhale project; and actions and outcomes made by SOHHS to coordinate with other public and private sector organizations to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the state. The bill adds new or clarified reporting requirements to the existing annual reports due to the legislature.

SOHHS's annual reports required by Sections 346-381 and 346-381, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) and Act 309, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH) are available on the Department of Human Services (DHS) website at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/>. Additional information relating to the activities of the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), including presentations and published reports, is available at

<https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/hich/hich-reports/>

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, conducted by the Continuum of Care (CoC) organizations for O'ahu and the neighbor island counties, is an important tool to measure homelessness at any given time. The 2024 PIT Count identified approximately 6,392 individuals experiencing homelessness statewide, an increase of approximately 2.7% (166 individuals) since 2023, excluding households residing in Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) programs on Maui. Approximately 70% (4,494 individuals) of individuals experiencing homelessness during the 2024 PIT Count resided on O'ahu. While the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on O'ahu increased by approximately 12% (466 individuals) from 2023 to 2024, homelessness in the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai decreased by a combined 14% (300 individuals). SOHHS remains committed to implementing and advancing innovative solutions to ending homelessness in Hawai'i.

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