



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka 'Oihana Ho'oka'a'ike no ka Po'e Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
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April 8, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON JUDICIARY AND ON WAYS AND MEANS

House Bill 1776 House Draft 2 Senate Draft 1 – Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of House Bill 1776 House Draft 2 Senate Draft 1 – Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code. This bill requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights online. It appropriates funds and is effective 7/1/3000.

DCAB frequently receives questions from landlords or tenants with disabilities who are unsure about their rights and responsibilities regarding effective communication, reasonable accommodations, reasonable modifications, and assistance animals. When this information is not clearly understood at the beginning of a tenancy, misunderstandings and misapplications of the law can occur. These situations may irreparably damage the landlord-tenant relationship. Providing clear guidance at the start of a rental agreement helps ensure that both parties understand their rights and obligations.

In order to ensure that the information is effectively communicated to a tenant at the beginning of a tenancy, we recommend that the language from Section 3 in the original version of House Bill 1776 be reinserted.

"§521-B Notice of tenant rights; disclosure. (a) A landlord shall provide a tenant with a copy of the notice of tenant rights, either physically or digitally, published by the office of consumer protection pursuant to section 521-A at or before the time the tenant signs a written rental agreement.

(b) A landlord who fails to comply with this section shall be subject to a fine of no more than \$ ____."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT HOUSE BILL 1776 HD2 SD1
RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD TENANT CODE

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ka Ho‘okolokolo
(Senate Committee on Judiciary)

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Ki‘ina Hana a me nā Kumuwaiwai
(Senate Committee on Ways and Means)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

‘Apelila 8, 2026

10:15AM

Lumi 211

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz and Rhoads , Vice Chair Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) SUPPORTS **HB1776 HD2 SD1**, which seeks to improve housing stability by ensuring tenants have access to clear, accurate, and culturally and linguistically appropriate information about existing tenant protections under Hawai‘i law.

Native Hawaiians experience disproportionate impacts across Hawai‘i’s rental housing system. Native Hawaiians are more likely to be renters, more likely to be rent-burdened, and more likely to experience housing instability and displacement than the general population. Native Hawaiians are also overrepresented among households facing eviction filings and among individuals experiencing homelessness. These disparities are compounded by barriers to justice, including limited access to legal representation, and fear of retaliation when asserting tenant rights. Because the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code operates primarily as a self-help framework, unequal access to clear and understandable legal information can result in unequal outcomes. Ensuring that tenants receive accessible, multilingual notice of their rights at lease signing is a preventative approach that promotes due process, reduces avoidable disputes, and advances fairness in Hawai‘i’s civil justice system. Providing clear, understandable information at the time a lease is signed helps prevent disputes and housing instability later in the tenancy.

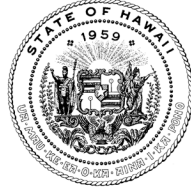
OHA supports this bill because it addresses a critical and practical gap in tenant protections. While tenant rights exist in statute, those protections function as self-help laws that often require tenants to navigate complex legal systems on their own. Without accessible guidance, renters may unknowingly waive rights, fail to seek assistance early, or face avoidable eviction and homelessness. As amended, this measure requires the Office of Consumer Protection to publish a clear, standalone notice of tenant rights under

the Residential Landlord Tenant Code in electronic format on a publicly accessible website.

OHA supports the establishment of a centralized and regularly updated source of tenant rights information. **However, the removal of the requirement for landlords to provide tenants with the most recent notice of tenant rights at or before lease signing may limit the measure's effectiveness.** Access to information is most impactful at the point of lease signing, and without directly providing this notice to tenants, particularly those with language barriers, limited digital access, or awareness, the reach of this resource may be reduced. OHA further notes that reliance on a web-based resource alone may not fully address barriers such as language access or digital access, particularly for tenants with limited English proficiency or literacy. Without direct provision of materials, and translated materials at the outset of tenancy, these renters may face continued challenges in accessing and understanding their rights.

OHA urges the Committee to **PASS HB1776 HD2, SD1** which represents a modest but meaningful step toward improving housing stability and ensuring that tenant protections enacted by law are meaningfully understood and applied by the people they are intended to serve. **To increase this measure's effectiveness, OHA supports adding back the requirement for landlords to provide tenants with the most recent notice of tenant rights at or before lease signing.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I. HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Wednesday, April 8, 2026
10:15 a.m.
Via Videoconference
Conference Room 211

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

On the following measure:
H.B. 1776, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE

Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Emma Olsen, and I am an Enforcement Attorney for the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Office of Consumer Protection (OCP). The Department appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments.

The concept proposed in this bill complements our ongoing initiative to make information about landlord and tenant rights and obligations available to the public. OCP currently publishes the Landlord-Tenant Handbook (LT Handbook), and we re-publish in response to changes to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code. Changes happen nearly every legislative session. Last session, for example, Act 278 created a two-year mandatory eviction mediation program for evictions for non-payment of rent. These changes are highlighted on OCP's website. A digital copy of the LT Handbook is available

for free on our website, and written copies may be purchased or mailed. At present, the LT Handbook is only available in English. We currently review the LT Handbook annually to ensure that the information provided to the public remains current. Our current annual review process is consistent with the annual review timeline for updating the proposed Notice of Tenant Rights.

In 2023, we contacted the Office of Language Access for guidance about commonly spoken languages and translating the LT Handbook into one or more additional languages. Following our consultation, we sought quotes from various providers and ultimately obtained a single quote for \$8,781 to translate the LT Handbook into four languages: Chinese (traditional only), Marshallese, Korean, and Chuukese. This quote may be under-inclusive, however, since there are other languages for which interpretation services are demanded in court proceedings. In 2023, the Judiciary compiled a list of the most commonly interpreted languages in courts throughout the State. The top six most interpreted languages were Chuukese, Ilocano, Marshallese, Spanish, Korean, and Tagalog.

At present, creating and translating the Notice of Tenant Rights are not within OCP's budget. The review, editing, and publication process for our LT Handbook involves our investigative, legal, and administrative staff, with final approval by OCP's Executive Director and assistance from the Department's communications team. Requiring OCP to create, maintain, and update a second public resource in addition to the existing LT Handbook would involve a similar drafting, review, approval, and publication process. Regarding accessibility for individuals with disabilities, as part of a department-wide initiative, we are reviewing all materials available to the public through our website, including electronic documents, to ensure they meet accessibility requirements under state and federal law, including the Department of Justice's final rule updating its regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

We appreciate the intent of this bill to enhance public awareness of tenant rights through materials produced by our office and offered free of charge to individuals with disabilities and members of our communities proficient in languages other than English.

Should the Committee wish to pass this bill, we respectfully request a \$30,000 general fund appropriation for costs associated with publishing the Landlord-Tenant Handbook and the Notice of Tenant Rights, including vendor translation services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
hawaiiyimby.org
info@hawaiiyimby.org

April 8, 2026

LATE

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senate Committee on Judiciary

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SUPPORT for HB 1776 - RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL
LANDLORD-TENANT CODE**

Aloha Chairs Dela Cruz & Rhodes, Vice Chairs Moriwaki & Gabbard, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of HB 1776**, which takes a simple but important step to strengthen housing stability by requiring the Office of Consumer Protection to publish a clear, accessible, and multilingual notice of tenant rights and ensuring that tenants have access to a clear, accessible, and multilingual notice of their rights.

In addition to our support, we request an amendment to restore the bill's original language that requires landlords to provide the notice of tenant rights at lease signing and establishes fines for non-compliance. **Accountability is essential** to ensure this information is consistently delivered to tenants when it matters most, and without enforcement, the policy risks uneven implementation and reduced effectiveness.

Renters make up a significant and essential part of Hawai'i's housing market, yet they often enter lease agreements with insufficient information. In an already imbalanced relationship, **renters deserve transparency and a more equal footing** so they can clearly understand their rights, responsibilities, and options under the law.



Hawai'i YIMBY
Honolulu, HI 96814
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This bill sets a reasonable baseline for landlord accountability. Providing accurate and accessible information about tenant rights is **the bare minimum** a landlord can do to support clear communication, shared expectations, and a healthier landlord-tenant relationship built on mutual understanding. When tenants know their rights upfront, disputes can be reduced and housing stability can improve. This allows for both parties to be held accountable by agreeing to clear terms before entering into an agreement.

Hawai'i is facing a severe housing shortage, and addressing it requires a coordinated approach. As the state works to increase the supply of housing, it is equally important to protect stability for the renters who already live here. This measure helps ensure that growth does not come at the expense of clarity, fairness, or housing security for tenants across the state

Hawai'i YIMBY (*Yes In My Backyard*) is a volunteer-led grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to supporting bold and effective solutions for Hawai'i's devastating housing crisis. Our members are deeply concerned about Hawai'i's chronic and worsening housing shortage, which has caused home prices to rise much faster than incomes and pushes thousands of kama'āina out to the mainland or into homelessness every single year.

We ask your support for this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Damien Waikoloa
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Huey Kwik
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





Committee: Senate Committees on Ways and Means & Judiciary
Hearing Date/Time: Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 10:15 AM
Place: Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i providing
COMMENTS on HB1776 HD2 SD1: Relating to the
Residential Landlord-Tenant Code**

Dear Chairs Dela-Cruz & Rhoads, Vice-Chairs Moriwaki & Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

The ACLU of Hawai'i ("ACLU-HI") is writing to provide **comments on HB1776 HD2 SD1**, which would require the Office of Consumer Protection to publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights online and appropriate funds.

We respectfully ask that the measure be amended to restore language from its previous version to ensure accessibility and accountability, including: (1) requiring a landlord to provide a tenant with a physical or digital copy of the most recently issued notice of tenant rights published by the Office of Consumer Protection at or before the time the tenant signs a written rental agreement and (2) establishing penalties for failure of a landlord to provide a tenant with a copy of the notice of tenant rights.

As not all tenants have equal access to the internet, a mandate to ensure all tenants receive notice of their rights is necessary. Because renters often lack sufficient information when entering lease agreements, this measure is important for ensuring housing stability by increasing transparency and accessibility before signing a written rental agreement.

Access to fair housing is a constitutionally afforded right, yet an imbalance between landlords and tenants persists. No tenant—especially those in multilingual households, immigrant communities, and people with disabilities—should fear retaliation or displacement, particularly when they are exercising rights provided in the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code.

By amending HB1776 HD2 to uphold accessibility and accountability, Hawai'i can help ensure that tenants are treated with dignity and respect by receiving accessible, up-to-date notice of their rights before entering lease agreements. We urge you to amend this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Donavan Kamakani Albano
Donavan Kamakani Albano
Policy Fellow
ACLU of Hawai'i

With more than 4,000 Hawaii-based members, the mission of the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i is to protect the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the United States and Hawai'i State Constitutions through legislative, litigation, and public education work. The ACLU of Hawai'i is a non-partisan and private non-profit organization that provides its services at no cost to the public and does not accept government funds. The ACLU of Hawai'i has been serving our communities in Hawai'i for over 60 years.

American Civil Liberties Union of Hawai'i
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COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT** OF HB 1776, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL
LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, Senator Hashimoto and
Senator DeCoite of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Veronica Mendoza, Founding Executive Director of Roots Reborn and a founding coalition
member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui - The People in Action Maui. Roots Reborn **strongly
supports HB 1776, HD2, SD1**, Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code, which requires the
Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights.

Roots Reborn is a grassroots, multicultural immigrant-justice and disaster-response organization serving
migrant and immigrant communities on Maui and beyond. Born out of the August 2023 wildfires, we
immediately stepped in to move aid, navigate systems alongside families, and build the trusted
relationships that still anchor our work today. What began as wildfire response has grown into essential
infrastructure for immigrant communities facing overlapping crises—from recovery and housing instability
to shifting federal policies, increased enforcement, and rising fear.

In our work we have identified risks to our community presented by unnecessary barriers, such as the
lack of an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights available in languages preferred by the
communities we serve. At the time of the wildfires, about one-third of Lahaina residents were foreign born,
and 36% aged five and older spoke a language other than English at home. In our work helping Maui
wildfire survivors navigate disaster recovery, health care, and legal representation, we assisted
community members with financial support to avoid eviction and helped some with the eviction process.
Roots Reborn has helped close some of the gap with disaster management and legal program language
assistance. However, our experience suggests that many community members for whom English is a
second language do not understand that they have rights as tenants, and that this lack of awareness of
their rights has created conditions where their rights are violated and where this community is made even
more vulnerable.

As a Maui-based disaster-response organization serving migrant and immigrant communities, we find that
the provision of accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights is necessary, timely, and responsive to
community needs and would provide a valuable resource that we could help bring to the community. We
urge you to support HB 1776, HD2, SD1, and to vote it out of this committee.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica Mendoza', written over a white background.

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*
El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*

To: Senate Committees on Judiciary and on Ways and Means
Re: **HB1776 HD2 SD1 – Relating to Housing**
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference
April 8, 2026 10:15 AM

Dear Chairs Rhoads and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Gabbard and Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of HB1776 HD2 SD1**. This bill requires the Office of Consumer Protection to publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights online.

During the pandemic, non-profit organizations like ours worked hard to help limited English proficiency (LEP) families in Hawai'i access the pandemic relief benefits that they qualified for. While working on this outreach, we learned that there was a lack of meaningful language access for LEP families, and that the federal government does not provide translations¹ in many of the languages that are the most spoken by LEP families in Hawai'i² – such as Ilocano, Marshallese, Tongan, and Chuukese.

In the aftermath of the Lahaina wildfires, our state again learned about the lack of resources to address the language needs of Hawai'i's residents, causing them to miss out on essential assistance. According to the language services coordinator for FEMA, who coordinated language access response after both the Lahaina and Paradise, California, fires, "the diverse cultures of Maui and the fact that many people did not feel comfortable dealing with government agencies, made the response in Lahaina unique."³

As one of the states with the highest portion of foreign-born residents,⁴ we believe Hawai'i needs to better ensure language access to our government services than most other states do. This bill would be a great step in that direction.

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

Sincerely,

Nicole Woo
Director of Research and Economic Policy

¹ United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/translated-applications>

² Hawai'i Data Exchange Partnership, https://hawaiiidxp.org/quick_data/datastory/el

³ <https://www.civilbeat.org/2024/03/people-who-dont-speak-english-lost-money-and-help-in-lahaina-response/>

⁴ Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/312701/percentage-of-population-foreign-born-in-the-us-by-state/>

April 8, 2026

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

RE: House Bill 1776, HD2, SD1, Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code

HEARING: Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 10:15 a.m.

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Joint Committees:

My name is Lyndsey Garcia, Director of Advocacy, testifying on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® ("HAR"), the voice of real estate in Hawaii and its over 10,000 members. HAR **supports the intent** of House Bill 1776, HD2, SD1, which beginning 7/1/2027, requires the Office of Consumer Protection to publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights online. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000.

With approximately 38% of Hawaii residents living in rental housing, the rental market plays a critical role in meeting the state's housing needs.¹ HAR believes that education for both tenants and housing providers is essential to ensuring a clear understanding of their respective rights and responsibilities.

In 2025, the Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 123, HD1, establishing a three-year Landlord-Tenant Working Group, of which Hawai'i REALTORS® and other key stakeholders are members. The Working Group is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code, and education for housing providers and tenants would be an important topic for the Working Group to discuss.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹ State of Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism. (June 2024). *Overcrowding in Housing*. https://files.hawaii.gov/dbedt/economic/reports/Overcrowding_in_Hawaii_Housing.pdf



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: April 8, 2026 at 10:15 AM (Room 211)

Re: SUPPORT for HB 1776 HD2 SD1, Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code

Dear Committee Members,

The Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i provides free, direct legal services to patients in community health settings. Many of our clients are low-income tenants and residents facing unstable housing situations. We testify in **SUPPORT** for **HB 1776 HD2 SD1**, that would promote tenants' knowledge of their rights under the Hawai'i residential Landlord-Tenant Code.

Housing cases comprise nearly one-third of all cases at our Medical-Legal Partnership program. We have counseled hundreds of local families about their housing rights, and we believe that many more tenants would be able to self-advocate and successfully resolve claims if they better understood their rights under the Landlord-Tenant Code. This includes, for example, tenant rights and remedies related to lease terminations, habitability/repairs, and security deposits.

We applaud that this bill requires translation of the notice into the most commonly spoken languages in the state, and accessibility considerations for people with disabilities. It is also critically important to ensure meaningful access to this information by requiring that landlords provide it at the beginning of tenancy. We therefore urge this committee to restore the following language from Section 3 of the original version of HB 1776:

521-B Notice of tenant rights; disclosure. (a) A landlord shall provide a tenant with a copy of the notice of tenant rights, either physically or digitally, published by the office of consumer protection pursuant to section 521-A at or before the time the tenant signs a written rental agreement.

(b) A landlord who fails to comply with this section shall be subject to a fine of no more than \$ ____.

I humbly add that the provisions of this bill are a good starting point, but more is needed to meaningfully increase tenant protections in Hawai'i. We work with many families facing unstable housing that could be strengthened with stronger rent stabilization, habitability enforcement, and more robust consumer protections.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1776 HD2 SD1.

/s/

Dina Shek
Legal Director

HB-1776-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 12:07:35 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/8/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1776 HB RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

Zoom neighborhood board meeting, a tenant expressed her concern that as a tenant she is "excluded" from a HOA meeting.

1776 HB RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

HB-1776-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 2:06:39 PM

Testimony for JDC on 4/8/2026 10:15:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in **support** of HB1776. While I remain in strong support of the bill's original intent, **two changes made by the previous committee have significantly weakened the bill and must be undone.**

Change #1: The notice has moved from active publication to a passive website.

The original bill required the Office of Consumer Protection to **periodically publish** a notice of tenant rights. The amended version merely requires posting an electronic notice on a DCCA website.

This is a dramatic step backward. A website does not reach tenants who lack reliable internet access, who are not fluent in navigating government portals, or who do not know the notice exists to look for it. The original "periodic publication" model ensured proactive distribution—through community organizations, libraries, legal aid offices, and other trusted touchpoints. A passive website is not publication; it is an abdication.

Request: Restore the requirement that the Office of Consumer Protection **periodically publish** the notice, not merely post it online.

Change #2: The landlord mandate and penalties have been deleted entirely.

The original bill required landlords to provide tenants with a physical or digital copy of the notice at or before the signing of a written rental agreement, and established penalties for failure to do so. The amended version deletes both the mandate and the penalties.

Without a requirement that landlords actually provide the notice, the bill does far less to ensure this information gets into the hands of tenants. A notice that exists only on a government website—one a tenant has no reason to visit and no knowledge of—is functionally invisible. And without penalties, even a mandate would be unenforceable. The previous committee has stripped the bill of its only teeth.

Request: Restore the requirement that landlords provide the notice to tenants at lease signing, and restore the penalties for non-compliance.

Why this matters

Hawai'i's landlord-tenant code operates on a dangerous fiction: that everyone who signs a lease understands the rights contained within HRS Chapter 521. For limited-English-proficient tenants, for immigrant families, for seniors, for low-income renters—this is not a "self-help" system. It is a trap.

HB1776 was a low-cost, high-impact intervention that would have reduced disputes, prevented costly litigation, and stabilized families in their homes. The amended version is a hollow shell.

Please revert both changes and restore HB1776 to its effective, enforceable original form.

Mahalo for your consideration.

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

TESTIMONY **IN SUPPORT** OF HB 1776, HD2, SD1 - RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, Senator Hashimoto for my Maui district, Senator DeCoite of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I am also an attorney licensed in the state of Hawaii for over 25 years and a founding coalition member of El Pueblo en Acción (EPA) Maui — The People in Action Maui. I am writing in **strong support of HB 1776, HD2, SD1**, Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code, beginning 7/1/2027, requires the Office of Consumer Protection to publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights online and appropriates funds.

I currently volunteer as a Know Your Rights and constitutional protector trainer and educator statewide. I have helped train teachers and students, business owners and union members, faith leaders and health care providers, parents and senior citizens on what their constitutional rights are, that these rights apply to all within the United States regardless of citizenship status, and how to ensure these rights are not violated. I have also trained them how to prepare themselves, their staff, and their places of work, their schools and community service locations for interactions with federal agents.

I begin my training presentations with an overview of why knowing our rights is important:

- **AWARENESS:** Many people in our communities simply do not know their rights, so they also do not know when their rights are being violated. People can take advantage of our ignorance about our rights, including rights under the Landlord-Tenant Code, as a mechanism to deprive us of them.
- **EMPOWERMENT TO EXERCISE RIGHTS:** Information and knowledge about one's rights empowers people to be able to exercise their rights to protect themselves, their families and communities.
- **BUILD COLLECTIVE POWER:** The more people know their rights and how to exercise them, the more power they have when faced with potential rights violations or exploitation. Knowing your rights is the first step to collective safety.

I request your support of HB 1776, HD2, SD1 to ensure that the intent of the Landlord-Tenant Code, to protect tenants from exploitation by unscrupulous landlords, is satisfied as intended by the Legislature. Here on Maui, we still have a housing crisis that was made worse after the 2023 wildfires. It is important to note that at the time of the wildfires, about one-third of Lahaina residents were foreign born and 36% aged five and older spoke a language other than English at home. Ensuring that all of our community members have tenant's rights information accessible and understandable to them is vital to protect some of our most vulnerable. House Bill 1776, HD 2, SD1, is a past-due measure to protect all community members that are navigating the Landlord-Tenant relationship. **I respectfully request you support HB 1776, HD2, SD1.**

Mahalo,

Christine Andrews, J.D.
Wailuku, Maui