

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

### **HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of

### **DEAN MINAKAMI**

Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation

Before the

### **HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

February 26, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Room 325

In consideration of

### **HOUSE BILL 1777 HOUSE DRAFT 1 RELATING TO HOUSING.**

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee.

HHFDC **supports** this House Bill 1777 House Draft 1, which addresses the issue of tenant displacement during housing redevelopment projects.

Most of HHFDC's affordable housing projects do not displace residents. If a project does cause displacement, we typically require developers to provide relocation assistance. This bill provides a balanced approach by ensuring that affordable housing projects financed by HHFDC include measures to protect displaced tenants. Specifically, the bill requires developers to:

1. Offer displaced tenants the right of first offer for a comparable unit in the new project.
2. Provide replacement housing payments to ease the financial burden of relocation.
3. Share information and guidance on relocation assistance and exercising tenant rights.
4. Maintain communication with displaced tenants throughout the redevelopment process.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



‘Ōlelo Hō‘ike ‘Aha Kau Kānāwai

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1777 HD1**  
RELATING TO HOUSING

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘okolokolo a me ke Kuleana  
Hawai‘i  
(House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs)

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

Pepeluali 26, 2026

2:00 PM

Lumi 32

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Aloha e Chair Tarans, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS HB1777 HD1**, which codifies clear tenant protection requirements in state law for housing projects receiving development assistance from the Hawai‘i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) when those projects result in tenant displacement.

OHA recognizes the State’s urgent need to increase housing production. However, policy strategies that support development must be paired with focused consumer protections to ensure redevelopment projects do not unintentionally displace the very residents they intend to serve. When public subsidies, regulatory exemptions under HRS §201H-38, or other forms of government assistance are utilized, the public has a legitimate interest in ensuring baseline protections for affected tenants. Displacement caused by redevelopment, rising rents, or housing market pressures destabilizes families, erodes social networks, and weakens community cohesion. For Native Hawaiians, housing displacement can mean the loss of multigenerational support systems, cultural connections, and access to essential services. Housing instability is strongly linked to negative health, educational, and economic outcomes. Native Hawaiians are disproportionately represented among low-income renter households and among households experiencing housing insecurity.

This issue is particularly acute given that more than half of all Native Hawaiians now live outside of Hawai‘i, largely due in large part to housing costs and displacement. OHA is increasingly concerned that many new developments often utilizing HRS §201H exemptions and significant state subsidies are removing older housing stock that was

previously affordable to local families. While these projects may increase total unit counts, replacement units are frequently priced at levels that make it financially impossible for former tenants to return. Without clear tenant protections and a right of first offer or return, redevelopment can result in a net loss of truly accessible housing for the very communities these projects are intended to serve.

From a consumer protection standpoint, tenants facing displacement are among the most vulnerable participants in Hawai'i's housing market. Codifying minimum standards in statute ensures predictability, fairness, and consistent enforcement. Some in the development industry have asserted that relocation protections under HRS §111-1 are sufficient. However, that statute applies only when displacement results from state acquisition or condemnation. In many redevelopment projects, the State is not acquiring property but privatizing or redeveloping land it already owns, and HRS §111-1 has therefore been construed not to apply. Additionally, HRS §111-1 provides no right of return or first opportunity for displaced tenants to return to their community following redevelopment. Other states have codified tenant relocation and right-of-return protections in statute rather than relying solely on federal requirements or contractual provisions. It is critical that minimum tenant protections be clearly established in state law rather than embedded solely in HHFDC agreements and that HHFDC's enforcement authority be explicit.

HB1777 HD1 creates reasonable, clearly defined consumer safeguards when public resources, regulatory exemptions, or government assistance are used to support housing development. It balances the need for increased housing production with fairness to tenants who may otherwise bear the burden of redevelopment.

For these reasons, OHA respectfully urges the committee to **PASS HB1777 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 1:49:06 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janice K T Shiira	Shimanchu Mamuyaa	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 4:41:11 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jesse Lipman	Kokua Kalihi Valley, CFS	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee,

I strongly support HB 1777. In my 20 plus years working with KKV and PACT in Kalihi I have seen the challenges faced by public housing residents first hand. Over the past several years I have worked with residents of KPT to protect their right to remain in their community and hold onto relationships with neighbors, schools and health care providers in the face of redevelopment. The developers made many promises but in the end displaced dozens of families with no real process and structure to return to their community as development improves the housing quality. Some of these friends have left Hawai'i, others moved into substandard overcrowded housing away from their long time Kalihi home, and some now live at the park out of their car.

It is vital that when we develop new housing we do it for those within the community first. And when displacement is necessary, it is accompanied by strong supports and a process to protect legal rights of return. With the Ka Lei Momi plan poised to create huge changes to many public housings the legislature can either learn from the failings of the first attempt at KPT redevelopment or continue to look away as our neighbors are pushed and disappear feeling abandoned, or pass legislation to get it right.

I encourage you to support this bill and look at ways to strengthen the language to codify rights of tenants and responsibilities of developers, so if they are profiting off the changes to Hawai'i communities, they bring the residents of those communities with them and not leave them behind.

**Testimony in support of HB1777 HD1 Relating to Housing  
By Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services  
Before the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
02/26/2026**

Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services strongly supports HB1777 HD1 Relating to Housing. This bill will help ensure that local families who have lived in an area for generations are not displaced to make way for ‘new affordable housing’ development.

HB1777 HD1 will ensure that all tenants get comprehensive relocation assistance and the choice to move back to the communities, where many have lived, worked and established ties for generations. KPT low-rise residents have asked for the following to be explicitly required by law:

- The right to return to the project, as promised by the developer when the developer was approved for LIHTC and RHRF subsidies from HHFDC (see link)
- Individualized relocation counseling, which provides tenants assistance with locating and leasing comparable housing and which follows tenants for the life of the redevelopment project, to maximize their likelihood of returning.

KPT low-rise tenants want to make sure no one in Mayor Wright or other redevelopment projects face [the same struggles they are having](#) (see link). Requiring developers to offer displaced community members the right to return ensures that affordable housing projects actually serve those most in need, especially our **local** families struggling in one of the most challenging economic and housing environments in the country.

We thank the Committees in advance for their strong support of this urgent and essential measure!



David Derauf, MD, MPH  
Executive Director

On behalf of Kōkua Kalihi Valley Comprehensive Family Services

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 8:28:14 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kami Yamamoto	Hawai'i Workers Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair & Vice Chair,

I am providing testimony in full support of HB1777 on behalf of our organization.

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

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

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Barbara Tom, and I am the Director of the Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center. I submit this testimony in strong support of HB1777-HD1.

Waipahu Safe Haven works closely with low-income immigrant and migrant families, many from Compact of Free Association (COFA) communities, who already face significant housing instability. In our experience, even when families have steady employment and increased income, they struggle to secure housing due to past evictions, limited English proficiency, or lack of understanding of their rights under Hawai'i's Landlord-Tenant Code.

When redevelopment projects move forward without strong tenant protections, families are often displaced with little guidance, limited language access, and no realistic pathway back into the new development. This can result in homelessness, overcrowding, or families doubling up in unsafe or unstable living conditions.

HB1777-HD1 provides critical safeguards by:

- Granting displaced tenants the right of first offer for a comparable unit in the new housing project
- Requiring replacement housing payments to reduce the financial shock of displacement
- Ensuring tenants receive clear information—directly or through contracted services—on how to access assistance and exercise their rights
- Establishing tracking and communication procedures so families are not lost in the process
- Creating consequences for developer noncompliance

These provisions are especially important for limited English proficient (LEP) residents who may not understand notices, deadlines, or eligibility requirements without proper language support. Without structured tracking and accountability, many vulnerable tenants simply fall through the cracks.

In communities like Waipahu—dense with low-income apartment complexes and immigrant families—redevelopment must not come at the cost of community stability. This bill strikes a fair balance between development and humane transition protections.

Housing stability is directly connected to educational success, health access, workforce participation, and overall community well-being. Protecting tenants during redevelopment is not only a housing issue—it is a public health and economic stability issue.

Waipahu Safe Haven respectfully urges you to PASS HB1777-HD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Barbara Tom, Director

Waipahu Safe Haven Immigrant/Migrant Resource Center





February 25, 2026

Representative David Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

RE: **HB 1777- Relating to Housing**  
**Hearing date: Thursday February 26, 2026 at 2:00PM**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee,

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

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

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

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

Should the committee elect proceed with the measure, NAIOP Hawai'i GAC requests that the bill be amended to expressly avoid duplicative or conflicting oversight for projects already subject to federal or existing State relocation regimes. Specifically, we recommend that Page 9, Lines 7-"*...provided that for projects developed under federal programs for affordable housing that offer relocation payments and other relocation assistance to displaced and evicted tenants, the federal regulations that offer greater protections to tenants be exempt from this section.*"

While we appreciate the previous committee's amendment to cap assistance at three months rent at the time of displacement, NAIOP Hawaii further recommends placing a cap on the three months' rent of compensation that is granted. At a maximum, the compensation provided should be three months of rent differential equaling the difference between a tenant's rent current at the time of displacement and the cost of rent in a comparable unit within the same district. This prevents a potential windfall and equitably accounts for the tenant's current living costs and the increase in costs associated with displacement.

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

Mahalo for your consideration,

Ken Hayashida, President  
NAIOP Hawaii



Committee: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hearing Date/Time: Thursday, February 26, 2026, at 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 325 & Via Videoconference  
Re: **Testimony of the ACLU of Hawai'i in SUPPORT of HB1777 HD1: Relating to Housing**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The ACLU of Hawai'i ("ACLU-HI") **supports HB1777 HD1**, which would establish tenant protection requirements for housing projects that receive development assistance from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC) and result in the displacement or eviction of tenants in existing affordable rental units. It would also direct HHFDC to take specific actions if a developer fails to comply with these requirements.

Tenants' rights is a civil liberties issue. All people, regardless of their circumstances or background, should have access to safe and stable housing. Evictions can shape access to education for children, physical and mental health, and financial stability.<sup>1</sup> Further, evictions are one of the direct causes of homelessness, which disproportionately affect communities of color. Based on 2024 Point In Time Count data, 51% of the population experiencing homelessness on O'ahu identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.<sup>2</sup>

Building affordable housing is necessary, but it should not come at the expense of existing renters. Those who are evicted from their homes may find themselves unable to afford or secure housing. This bill ensures that developers are responsible if their redevelopment projects displace people by providing relocation assistance, replacement housing payments, and the right to first return, providing existing renters with the first opportunity to apply for a unit in the new project.

By passing HB1777 HD1, Hawai'i can ensure that tenants are treated with dignity and respect by establishing necessary protections from displacement.

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<sup>1</sup> ACLU. (2022). *No Eviction Without Representation: Evictions' Disproportionate Harms and the Promise of Right to Counsel*. <https://www.aclu.org/publications/no-eviction-without-representation>

<sup>2</sup> Partners In Care O'ahu. (2024). *Point In Time Count 2024 Comprehensive Report*. <https://www.partnersincareoahu.org/pitc>

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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# Parents And Children Together

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIPS  
THAT MATTER MOST

ParentsAndChildrenTogether.org

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1777 HD1 RELATING TO HOUSING

**TO:** Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, & Members, House Committee on Judiciary  
**FROM:** Tina Porras-Jones, PACT EVP of Community Building Programs  
Trisha Kajimura, PACT VP of Strategy and External Affairs  
**DATE:** February 12, 2026, 2:00 PM

**Parents and Children Together (PACT) supports HB 1777 HD1**, which requires developers under the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation to assist certain tenants who are subject to displacement or eviction due to the development of affordable housing projects. These tenants will have the right of first offer of a comparable unit, receive replacement housing payments and assistance through the process. Developers will also be required to establish procedures to track and maintain communication with the displaced tenants through the redevelopment period.

PACT's origins are in public housing. We were founded by residents of Kuhio Park Terrace in 1968 and have had a home-base there ever since. Currently we have programs based at KPT, including our Family and Economic Opportunities Centers, Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms and offices, and our Tenacious, Rooted Youth Center (formerly known as the Teen Center). We also have a Youth Center at Pu'uwai Momi Public Housing in Halawa. These roots in public housing and our relationship with families over the years are key to PACT's values and identity as an organization.

Through these programs we provide direct services and partner with families to connect them with support for their health, safety, and economic stability. Displacement and relocation without intensive support disconnects people from critical services such as healthcare, childcare, and the school environments they are familiar with. It's important to us that the community we have been nurtured in is similarly treated with respect and dignity as their legal rights are protected. Residents forced to relocate during development or redevelopment must retain their access to services and schools, so their healthcare, social services and education are not interrupted.

Over the years, PACT has developed into a statewide community-based organization providing a wide array of innovative and educational social services to families in need. Assisting more than 18,000 people across the state annually, we help identify, address, and successfully resolve challenges through our 20 programs. Among our services are early education programs, domestic violence prevention and intervention programs, child abuse prevention and intervention programs, childhood sexual abuse supportive group services, child and adolescent behavioral health programs, sex trafficking intervention, poverty prevention and community building programs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please contact Trisha Kajimura at (808) 847-3285 or [tkajimura@pacthawaii.org](mailto:tkajimura@pacthawaii.org) if you have any questions.



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

February 26, 2026

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SUPPORT for HB 1777 HD1 - RELATING TO HOUSING**

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

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we write in **support of HB 1777 HD1**, which requires protections and assistance for tenants who are displaced by housing projects that receive support from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation. Hawai'i's housing shortage remains severe and will continue to require the redevelopment of existing residential areas into more dense housing. As we redevelop older housing stock, it is essential that current residents are treated fairly and given a meaningful opportunity to remain part of their community.

HB 1777 HD1 strikes an important balance by allowing housing development to move forward while recognizing the real human costs of displacement. The bill requires developers to offer displaced tenants the right of first offer to a comparable unit in the new project and to provide replacement housing payments and clear information about relocation assistance. While we agree that lowering the overall cost of building housing must remain a priority, we also believe that the impacts of displacement should not be ignored or shifted entirely onto tenants. These costs should be acknowledged as part of responsible redevelopment.

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



**Hawai'i YIMBY**  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
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plan for their housing future. These provisions promote housing stability and reduce unnecessary disruption for families and communities.

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

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

Sincerely,  
Damien Waikoloa  
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Edgardo Díaz Vega  
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY

Huey Kwik  
Chapter Lead, Hawai'i YIMBY





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## TESTIMONY On HB1777 – Relating to Housing

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Avalon Development Company with comments.

Avalon Development Company strongly supports efforts to reduce tenant displacement when existing rental housing is redeveloped. Protecting residents during transitions is essential to maintaining stable communities. At the same time, we are concerned that, as currently drafted, HB 1777 may impose additional financial and administrative burdens that could unintentionally delay or constrain the production of much-needed affordable housing.

To ensure the measure achieves its goals without undermining project feasibility, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

**Exempt Tenants Receiving Other Assistance:** We recommend expressly excluding tenants who are already receiving relocation or displacement assistance under existing federal (HUD) or state (HHFDC) programs from receiving duplicative benefits under this measure. Without this clarification, the bill may create overlapping obligations that increase project costs without providing additional meaningful protection.

**Refine Relocation Compensation:** While we support providing meaningful relocation assistance, the current provision requiring payment of the lesser of three months' rent or an amount affordable at 60% AMI may create unintended financial strain on projects. We recommend instead limiting compensation to three months of the rent differential between the tenant's current rent and the cost of a comparable unit within the same district. This approach fairly addresses displacement impacts while avoiding windfalls that could jeopardize overall project viability.

Avalon Development Company respectfully urges the Committee to balance important tenant protections with the financial realities of affordable housing development. With thoughtful refinement, HB 1777 can safeguard residents while preserving the ability to deliver new housing opportunities across Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your consideration.



**AVALON**  
DEVELOPMENT

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Respectfully submitted,  
Avalon Development Company



# HAWAII APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
**Support for HB1777 HD1– Relating to Housing**  
House Committee on Consumer Protection  
Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00PM Conf. Rm. 325 and via Videoconference

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Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the committee;

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of HB1777 HD1**, which establishes a method of stabilizing residents who may be displaced by new HHFDC assisted projects. This legislation creates a framework that addresses potential tensions between our urgent need for new affordable housing and community concern of new developments, while protecting our existing communities and their residents.

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

HB1777 HD1 addresses the issues and concerns around displacement by establishing a clear, predictable framework for residents protections during redevelopment. By requiring meaningful relocation assistance, clear communication, and the right return to comparable affordable units, the measure ensures that new housing investment does not come at the expense of people who already call these communities home.

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

HB1777 HD1 recognizes that housing production and resident stability are not competing goals. When done thoroughly, they reinforce each other.

We respectfully urge the committee to move HB1777 HD1 forward. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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

<sup>2</sup>

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

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



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

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair

Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 26, 2026 at 2:00pm (Room 325)

**Re: SUPPORT for HB 1777 HD 1, Relating to Housing**

Dear Committee Members,

The Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i provides free, direct legal services to patients in community health settings. Many of our clients are public housing tenants and residents facing unstable housing situations. We testify in **SUPPORT for HB 1777 HD 1**, which would prevent further displacement of low-income residents impacted by affordable housing redevelopment across Hawai'i.

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

As detailed by [Civil Beat](#)<sup>1</sup>, over the last year, sixty-four KPT Low-Rise units were demolished to build 304 affordable housing units, yet most residents faced deeply inadequate relocation services. Despite some federal protections that require certain relocation services, tenants had limited recourse to bring complaints. Importantly, the tenants had no process to facilitate their contractually required right to return. Because state law does not require this right to return.

As more housing is redeveloped, the state must step in to pass legislation to ensure minimal protections are clear in state law, not buried in contractual documents from HHFDC (Hawai'i Housing Finance & Development Corporation). Additionally, we must have clear enforcement and accountability. During the KPT Low-Rise redevelopment, I personally accompanied KPT residents to a “comparable unit” that was boarded up and uninhabitable. Households with disabled elders were offered walk-ups and inaccessible units. And families with school-aged children were sent to units far outside their school districts. This struggle is still on-going, and some of those same KPT tenants filed a lawsuit against the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority for violating their rights under federal law related to the KPT Low-Rise redevelopment. If HHFDC had enforcement powers, this litigation would be unnecessary.

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



## Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i

A Project of the William S. Richardson School of Law

Some claim that the provisions in HB 1777 are already covered by federal law. They are not. At best, the [massive redevelopment plans of Governor Green and HPHA](#) may only be required by federal law to provide displaced tenants with relocation to a comparable unit, as was required for the KPT Low-Rise redevelopment. There was no federal right to return or rent support obligations. In fact, the right of first refusal and ongoing communication with tenants (which was terribly executed) was required only by HHFDC, not federal law.

I also heard claims that requiring these provisions under state law might delay redevelopment. This seems unlikely. Using [KPT Low-Rise](#) as an example, even if the 64 displaced households received the maximum rent support allowed in this bill (approx. \$1,800/month), the 3 months' requirement for 64 units would be about \$345,000. This is a fraction of the \$65 million in subsidies and low-interest loans (at 0.0% to 0.25%) the developers are receiving. Further, the KPT residents served by our MLPC typically paid monthly rents from \$50 to \$1,300. Realistically, HB 1777's provisions would have required the developer to pay about \$120,000 in rent supports to the tenants. This is neither a burden to developers, nor a "windfall" for tenants.

HB 1777 HD 1 is a critical step to prevent further loss of local families, and to begin building accountability into the numerous redevelopment projects to come in Hawai'i.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1777 HD 1.

/s/

Dina Shek  
Legal Director



## **Testimony in Support of HB 1777 HD1**

### **Relating to Housing – Tenant Protections for Displaced Residents**

Submitted to the Hawaii House of Representatives

Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026

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

I submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB 1777 HD1, which provides critical protections for tenants displaced by housing redevelopment projects assisted by the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC).

### **HAWAII'S HOUSING CRISIS AND ITS HUMAN COST**

Hawaii faces one of the most severe housing crises in the nation. Skyrocketing rents, limited inventory, and decades of under building have pushed working families, including teachers, healthcare workers, service industry employees, and long-time community members, to the economic margins. Many have already been forced to leave the islands entirely. While we must urgently build more housing, we cannot allow the cure to worsen the disease by displacing the very people affordable housing is meant to serve.

### **WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY**



The tenants most vulnerable to displacement are Hawaii's working class—those who labor to keep our communities functioning but who lack the financial cushion to absorb sudden housing disruption. Losing a home is not merely an inconvenience; it means uprooted children, fractured social networks, lost jobs, and in too many cases, homelessness. When we allow redevelopment to proceed without meaningful tenant protections, we are effectively subsidizing the displacement of working people with public funds. HB 1777 ensures that state-assisted development serves the public good, but not at the expense of the public.

### SOCIOECONOMIC EQUITY

Moreover, displacement disproportionately harms Hawaii's most vulnerable residents, including Kānaka Maoli, Pacific Islanders, immigrants, elderly residents, and low-income families who have built lives and communities in place over generations. The right of first offer for a comparable unit, combined with replacement housing payments, represents a meaningful step toward equity, ensuring that those who bear the burden of redevelopment are also among its beneficiaries. Anything less perpetuates a cycle in which wealth is built on the backs of those least able to bear the cost.

### CONCLUSION

HB 1777 HD1 strikes a necessary and just balance that continues to prioritize affordable housing production while ensuring that working families are not sacrificed in the



process. The protections this legislation establishes are reasonable, enforceable, and long overdue.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo for your consideration.

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**The Thirty-Third Legislature  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Thursday, February 26, 2026  
Conference Room 325  
2:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director  
RE: Support for H.B. 1777, HD1 Relating to Housing

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i López, and I serve as State Director of AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people age 50 and older to live with dignity, security, and independence. On behalf of our more than **135,000 members statewide**, we **strongly support** H.B. 1777, HD1, and we urge this committee to pass this measure without weakening its core protections.

H.B. 1777, HD1 confronts a **critical failure in Hawai'i's housing system**: when housing developments that receive **public assistance** are redeveloped, tenants—often older adults and families with limited incomes—can be displaced with little meaningful protection. This bill makes clear that **when public dollars are used, the public interest must be protected**, and that includes the people who already call these homes their own.

At its core, this measure affirms a simple but essential principle: **publicly assisted redevelopment must not come at the expense of the very residents it is intended to serve**. Without enforceable statutory safeguards, redevelopment too often results in involuntary displacement, loss of community, and financial instability—outcomes that are especially devastating for older adults living on fixed incomes. Housing instability at later stages of life is not a temporary inconvenience; it can permanently undermine health, independence, and well-being.

H.B. 1777, HD1 is strong because it establishes **clear, enforceable obligations** for developers receiving assistance from the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC). Specifically, the bill requires developers to:

- Provide displaced tenants with a **Right of First Offer for a comparable unit** in the redeveloped project ensuring a **real, enforceable right to return**, not a hollow promise.

- Provide a **replacement housing payment** equal to the lesser of three months' rent or three months of rent affordable to a two-person household at **60% of area median income**, recognizing the actual costs of displacement, including deposits, moving expenses, and interim housing.
- Deliver **clear information and meaningful assistance** so tenants understand their rights and options, reducing fear and confusion during an already destabilizing process.
- Maintain **early and continuous communication**, beginning at least **120 days before** notices to vacate are issued and continuing through project completion, creating transparency and accountability throughout redevelopment.

These provisions are not excessive, they are **practical, humane, and proportionate**. They do not stop redevelopment. They simply ensure that redevelopment is done **responsibly**.

The need for these protections is urgent. Hawai'i is entering a period of heightened housing instability, with thousands of affordability restrictions set to expire in the coming years. While H.B. 1777, HD1, does not solve every aspect of this looming crisis, it directly addresses one of its most harmful consequences: **the preventable displacement of tenants during redevelopment**. Displacement is not an abstract policy outcome; it is a lived experience that fractures communities and disproportionately harms older residents.

Importantly, this measure includes **meaningful enforcement**. HHFDC is empowered to ensure compliance through funding delays, halted relocation activities, withheld disbursements, or temporary ineligibility for future assistance. These mechanisms ensure that the bill's protections are **real and enforceable**, not merely aspirational.

H.B. 1777, HD1 strikes the right balance. It supports continued housing development while drawing a clear line that **tenants are not collateral damage**. By codifying the right to return, requiring modest relocation assistance, and mandating early and ongoing communication, the bill reflects Hawai'i's commitment to fairness, kuleana, and community stability.

Housing policy is not only about producing units, but also about **protecting people**. We respectfully urge the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs to **pass H.B. 1777, HD1**, and to affirm that when public resources are invested in housing, Hawai'i will not abandon the residents who depend on it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your leadership on this critical issue.

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 12:19:45 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Doneileen Willets	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

My name is Doneileen Willets and I stand in full support of Bill HB 1777. This bill entails more than just protection for our residents, it brings clarity and light on situations that should involve sustainable needs for those facing hardship when being transitioned for redevelopment. My family includes 2 elders and 3 children alongside myself and during our transition we've dealt with health issues, anxiety and stress all the while fighting a deadline. I'm speaking by example. We would love to see inspirational changes in these matters in the future.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 4:16:00 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

As a renter on Oahu, I support HB 1777 HD 1.

Please support this bill as well.

Cheryl Burghardt

Nuuanu Oahu

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:20:46 PM

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

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 testifying in **strong support** of HB1777. This bill provides critical, common-sense protections for some of Hawai‘i’s most vulnerable residents: the families and individuals living in state-funded 201H affordable housing projects.

Hawai‘i is in the midst of a housing crisis, and we desperately need to redevelop our aging affordable housing stock. However, redevelopment should not come at the cost of displacing the very people these homes were built to serve.

Currently, when a 201H project is redeveloped, residents face a fragmented, uncertain process. Without guaranteed relocation assistance and a legally enforceable right to return, many families slip through the cracks—ending up doubled up in overcrowded homes, priced out of their neighborhoods, or facing homelessness.

HB1777 solves this by establishing a predictable, transparent framework for everyone involved. It is a fair compromise: it allows developers to move forward with much-needed projects while ensuring that residents are treated with dignity.

Specifically, HB1777 does three essential things:

1. **Guarantees Communication:** It requires developers to provide clear, accessible information to tenants about their rights and how to exercise them. This ends the confusion that often leaves kupuna and non-English speaking families left behind.
2. **Ensures Stability:** By granting tenants the right of first offer to a comparable unit in the new project and providing replacement housing payments during construction, this bill ensures that redevelopment is a pathway to better housing, not displacement.
3. **Establishes Accountability:** By creating tracking procedures and consequences for noncompliance, this bill ensures that promises made to residents are legally enforceable promises kept.

This is not just about buildings; it is about people. It is about the working families, the elderly, and the disabled who rely on this housing stability. Redevelopment should uplift communities, not break them apart. HB1777 offers a humane, financially responsible path forward that prevents the high social and financial costs of displacement-induced homelessness.

I respectfully urge you to pass HB1777. It is the right thing to do for our families and for the future of affordable housing in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 7:31:18 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angie Knight	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the passing of HB1777. More housing inventory is a known need for our community, but it should also include protections for the housing stability of those who already live in the parcels slated for development. It makes sense that in the pursuit of building more houses, households don't completely lose their housing. Over half of our State's households currently live paycheck to paycheck; the idea of having to find new housing, with both the time and money to do so, can feel, and even be, crippling. Passing this bill would provide tangible relief and support for those suddenly confronted with housing instability. Mahlao for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 11:32:40 AM

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

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1777 HB RELATING TO HOUSING.

## **Testimony: HB 1117**

**2 26. 2026**

Good afternoon Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee.

My name is Rona Mangayayam. For the past six years and counting, I have the joy of working with Kalihi youth and families as Kokua Kalihi Valley's Director of Youth Services . I have witnessed and participated in many of their joys and challenges including holding space for those who were displaced in the first phase of the KPT Redevelopment.

More than a month ago, a former participant in one of our youth programs reached out to us and ask if he can come back and volunteer in the program. He just graduated in high school last May 2025 and he and his family are one of those who were displaced in this first phase of redevelopment. They now live in Ewa Beach.

When I asked why he would like to come and volunteer, he said, because I would like to also give back to younger youth what I had when I was in the program. This is my community, and Kalihi is where I have my connections. He is now in his second month of volunteering.

Recently, I had a conversation with him and asked, what are those he is looking forward too, and his first answer was – returning home here in Kalihi, “I was born and raise at low rise, we respect each other there as neighbors, and we help each other. That is why I came here to volunteer to give me that sense of who I am.

As of now, my older sister works here in Kalihi, my younger sister goes to Farrington, and we all must ride together and wait each other again going back because we only have one car. If we live here in Kalihi, I could just walk here, my other sister will also just walk to her work.

My younger sister decided to stay at Farrington because she is in one of the Academies, she does not want to give that up. Her friends are all here too. He further shared that his cousin who was also displaced to Ewa Beach decided to transfer at Campbell and is now struggling to make connections and build a support group.

This is just one youth among the many who were displaced.

One middle school student whose family was move to Halawa choose to continue going to school in Kalihi – because it is here where he has built relationship with other students and found support with them including going to programs after school. He said, when other

people in school ask me where I came from – I am not sure what to answer because my heart is in Kalihi, but I sleep in Halawa. I felt like I lost my identity.

I respectfully urge you to pass this bill to give the tenants the right to return. But to many youths and their families, it is about returning home and reclaiming their lost identity. If you pass this bill, we hope that other youth and families who will be affected by ongoing and future redevelopment will hopefully minimize the many unhealthy impact on their lives.

Thank you very much!

**HB-1777-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:45:19 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Jen Lum, and I am a resident of the community writing in strong support of HB1777. This bill provides critical, common-sense protections for some of Hawaii's most vulnerable residents: the families and individuals living in state-funded 201H affordable housing projects.

Hawaii is in the midst of a housing crisis, and we desperately need to redevelop our aging affordable housing stock. However, redevelopment should not come at the cost of displacing the very people these homes were built to serve. Currently, when a 201H project is redeveloped, residents face a fragmented, uncertain process. Without guaranteed relocation assistance and a legally enforceable right to return, many families slip through the cracks— ending up doubled up in overcrowded homes, priced out of their neighborhoods, or facing homelessness.

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It is a fair compromise: it allows developers to move forward with much-needed projects while ensuring that residents are treated with dignity.

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I respectfully urge you to pass HB1777. It is the right thing to do for our families and for the future of affordable housing in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.