

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



RYAN I. YAMANE  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'ŌKELE

February 16, 2026

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

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: **HB 2560 HD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the intent of the bill to utilize federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support families of students experiencing homelessness and provides comments. DHS respectfully requests clarification and suggests amendments. DHS defers to the Department of Education regarding any concerns about DHS retaining records for this proposed service, as well as any operational and resource needs.

This bill proposes to establish a two-year pilot program within DHS, supported with federal TANF funds, to provide short-term, flexible assistance to eligible families of students experiencing homelessness, up to \$500 per student per school year.

For the committee's information, the DOE can refer families experiencing a financial crisis to the DHS existing [Hawaii Relief Program](#) to apply for four months of rental, mortgage, or utility assistance.

For the committee's information, pursuant to section 401, Title IV-A of the Social Security Act [42 U.S.C. 601], states may utilize federal TANF funds for benefits, programs, and services that meet one of the following purposes:

- (1) Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
- (2) End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
- (3) Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- (4) Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

This bill proposes to provide temporary financial stabilization assistance, including food, clothing, transportation, and other short-term needs. These assistance payments may qualify under TANF Purpose 1; therefore, "means testing" must be an eligibility criteria to receive federal TANF-funded payments.

Additionally, in accordance with 8 U.S.C. 1611(a), an individual who is not a qualified immigrant is not eligible for any federal public benefit as defined in 8 U.S.C. 1611(c). Therefore, students and their family members who may receive assistance through the proposed pilot program must be either U.S. citizens, qualified immigrants according to the terms described in section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.], or qualified individuals lawfully residing in the U.S. in accordance with the Compacts of Free Association. If the pilot program intends to provide assistance regardless of a student's or family member's citizenship status, then 100% state funds will be required to serve students and their families who do not qualify for TANF.

For the committee's information, the TANF program provides monthly cash benefits (further described below) to eligible families and administers the First-To-Work (FTW) program for recipient families to gain financial independence through vocational training and educational support, employment-related services, and supportive service payments such as child care subsidies, transportation assistance (e.g., reimbursements for mileage and parking fees, monthly bus passes, etc.), and education and work-related expenses.

DHS also administers the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), a federally funded program that provides essential food and nutrition support to qualifying low-income and needy households.

DHS respectfully requests an amendment deleting the language in Section 2, paragraph (a), at page 2, line 5, "for equitable distribution," as it is unclear who would determine the equitable distribution.

As drafted, the temporary financial stabilization assistance proposed through this pilot program may duplicate the existing "non-assistance" provided by the Hawaii Relief Program and supportive service payments that DHS already provides First-To-Work (FTW). To avoid duplicate payments, DHS and DOE will need to coordinate and establish information-sharing agreements, among other measures.

The Department requests clarification regarding Section 2, subsection (f), (page 3, starting at line 3), which states that funds distributed under the pilot program shall be used in a flexible spending model, and subsection (g), which states that purchases for families and students shall be made directly by the appropriate complex area community homeless concerns liaison. The bill does not define or describe the flexible spending model or how purchases will be made for families or students. As drafted, it is unclear whether the proposed flexible spending model and federal TANF fund expenditures will comply with the requirements and provisions of 2 C.F.R. Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

The Department also requests clarification of Section 2, subsection (f), paragraph (4), (page 3, lines 10-11), which includes "other short-term necessities." Similarly, as drafted, it is unclear whether "other short-term necessities" constitute payments classified as "assistance" [45 C.F.R. 260.31]. There are additional federal requirements when a family receives federal TANF-funded "assistance," such as cooperating to establish paternity and child support payments if there is an absent parent of a minor dependent child; mandatory participation with the Department's TANF work program; limitation of sixty months of financial assistance payments in a family's lifetime; and administrative reporting requirements.

For payments to be considered "non-assistance," the payments must be non-recurrent and short-term; may not extend beyond four months; and the payments are provided to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need and are not intended to meet the family's recurrent or ongoing needs. This bill does not define the term "short-term"; therefore, the

Department is unable to determine whether “other short-term necessities” meet the criteria of “non-assistance.”

Section 2, subsection (h), (page 4, lines 1-2) states that no direct monetary disbursements, cash assistance, or gift cards shall be provided to families or students under the pilot program. The Department requests clarification on how the pilot program intends to issue temporary financial stabilization assistance. If the intention is to provide the federal funded assistance payments to third party payees, on behalf of eligible families, then the pilot program must ensure third party payees are compliant with applicable federal, state, and county laws that in any way affect the payee’s ability to do business in the state, including compliance with the rules or regulations of the state Department of Taxation and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

The Department also suggests the following technical amendments: line 5 on page 5 is incorrectly labeled as “Section 2” and should be “Section 3”; and line 9 on page 5 is incorrectly labeled as “Section 3” and should be “Section 4.”

Should this measure continue to proceed, DHS will require additional resources to administer the pilot program as proposed, and at a minimum, one (1) full-time equivalent program specialist position that would require a matching general fund appropriation to oversee the statewide coordination of services. The Department will continue to update its testimony with the resource needs for implementation as this bill progresses.

DHS respectfully requests that the proposed pilot program and any appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the executive budget.

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

# Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i

# KAWAIILOA

February 15, 2026

House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness

Hearing Time: 9:30AM

Location: House Conference Room 329

Re: HB2560 HD1, Relating to Homelessness

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

On behalf of the Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i hui, we are writing in **strong support of HB2560 HD1, relating to homelessness**. This bill will establish a two-year pilot program within the Department of Human Services to provide temporary financial stabilization assistance to families with students identified as experiencing homelessness. The program will be funded through the Department of Human Services using allowable Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds. The bill will also require the Department of Education Complex Area Community Homeless Concerns Liaison to make approved purchases.

Homelessness continues to affect many communities across Hawai'i. It is especially harmful for families with children because they often face immediate and urgent financial needs that can compromise housing stability and the children's educational outcomes. The lack of a permanent, stable, and adequate residence directly disrupts homeless students' educational experience because they often face enrollment, consistent attendance, academic success, and other educational barriers when their family must worry about securing a safe place to live and meeting their family's basic financial needs.

Thus, by creating a pilot program that provides temporary financial stabilization assistance for homeless families with children in school, HB2560 HD1 gives students in this situation the opportunity to fully participate in school and thrive academically, rather than worrying about their family's housing or financial situation. Addressing the financial needs of homeless youth and their families can prevent or reduce the harmful effects of unstable housing and financial instability on homeless youth in school. Homeless students can greatly benefit from the timely, flexible financial support this program provides because it provides access to necessities. It is critical that these homeless families and their children in school receive the access and support they need to address their housing instability and financial deficits, because when these basic needs are met, students can focus more on school and remain engaged in their education.

Opportunity for Youth Action Hawai'i is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth; promoting equity in the justice system; and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth homelessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.



**Chair Marten**  
**Vice Chair Olds**  
**House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness**

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026**  
**9:30 AM**

**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB 2560 RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Human Services & Homelessness,

The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, “to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State.” The Hawai‘i State Youth Commission’s Legislative Committee on Public Health is in **strong support** of **HB 2560**.

Youth homelessness remains a significant and urgent issue across Hawai‘i. According to Hale Kipa, more than 3,600 public school students (K-12) were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2018-2019 school year. Of homeless youth identified, 297 were unsheltered, 777 were in shelters, 19 were in hotels or motels, and 2,510 were doubled up.<sup>1</sup> Although these figures are several years old, they reflect a crisis that has only been intensified by rising housing costs and economic instability.

More recent data confirms the ongoing need. In January 2026 alone, Partners in Care reported that 384 youth on O‘ahu were enrolled in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration

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<sup>1</sup>Hale Kipa. (2021). [National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Draws Attention to 2.5 million Youth Per Year Who Experience Homelessness.](#)

Program. Since fall 2020, 1,646 youth on O‘ahu have enrolled in these programs.<sup>2</sup> These numbers represent only those connected to services on one island. Many more youth remain unstably housed, particularly on neighbor islands.

For example, while approximately 25 individuals are officially counted as homeless on Moloka‘i, this does not capture the significant population of “hidden homeless” youth and families who are chronically housing-insecure.<sup>3</sup> Many young people are living in overcrowded homes, doubled up with extended family, or moving between temporary arrangements. This instability directly affects school attendance, academic performance, and overall well-being.

The consequences of youth homelessness extend far beyond housing. According to Hale Kipa, homeless youth face increased risks of substance abuse, early parenthood, impulsivity, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and vulnerability to trafficking. Without timely intervention, short-term crises can escalate into long-term educational and social disruption.

HB 2560 is not a long-term solution to youth homelessness, but it has the ability to provide critical and immediate relief. We particularly support allocating funds through the Department of Education and empowering complex area homeless concerns liaisons to directly purchase essential items for students in crisis. These small, timely interventions, such as food, clothing, or transportation, can prevent deeper displacement and help keep students connected to school while families work toward longer-term stability.

For these reasons, the Hawai‘i State Youth Commission respectfully urges the Committee to **pass HB 2560**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Hawai‘i State Youth Commission

[hawaii-state-yc@gmail.com](mailto:hawaii-state-yc@gmail.com)

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<sup>2</sup>Partners in Care. (2026). [Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. YHDP Dashboard.](#)

<sup>3</sup>Molokai Dispatch. (2023). [Progress on Solutions for the Unhoused.](#)

**Judith F. Clark**  
48-218 Kamehameha Highway  
808-499-9966  
[Judithforceclark@gmail.com](mailto:Judithforceclark@gmail.com)  
Kaneohe, Hawaii 96744

February 12, 2026

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

**Testimony in Support of HB 2560 HD 1 Relating to Homelessness**  
**(with recommendations for amendments)**

As a community advocate, a homeless youth service provider for 25 years, and a person with lived experience of youth homelessness, I support HB 2560 HD 1.

Homeless students experience many challenges and barriers in obtaining educational services. Providing financial assistance for food, clothing, transportation, and other services will remove barriers to homeless students' ability to attend school

This bill does not address the needs of unaccompanied youth who have equal need for this assistance. An amendment to create a mechanism for unaccompanied youth to participate in the pilot program would improve access to education for ALL homeless youth.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Judith F. Clark, MPH