

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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**Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Tuesday, April 7, 2026  
2:05 p.m.  
Via Videoconference  
Conference Room 329**

**On the following measure:  
S.B. 2347, S.D. 1, RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE**

Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committee:

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.

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.

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.

While translation would expand the audience for the LT Handbook and the Notice of Tenant Rights, we recently began exploring other ways to make the LT Handbook more accessible, focusing on re-writing topics that generate the most public inquiries—evictions, security deposits, repairs, and breaking the lease. We are assessing ways to make these sections, and ultimately the entire handbook, more accessible to the public.

The concept proposed in this bill complements our ongoing initiative to make information about landlord and tenant rights and obligations available to the public. At present, creating and translating the Notice of Tenant Rights are not within OCP's budget and this bill proposes an unfunded mandate. Requiring a second resource in addition to the existing LT Handbook would involve a similar drafting, review, approval, and publication process. 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. Establishing a separate publication would require comparable internal coordination and review and may necessitate additional time and staff resources.

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 in the bill.

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. The Department is taking appropriate steps to meet the April 24, 2026, accessibility deadline

established by the Department of Justice's final rule updating its regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, for existing materials, and to ensure future compliance.

We appreciate the intent of this bill to enhance public awareness of tenant rights.

Should the Committee wish to pass this bill, we respectfully request the following amendments:

- (1) Replace the language at Page 3, lines 4-8, with the following: "(a) The office of consumer protection shall create a notice of tenant rights that summarizes the rights of tenants under this chapter. Beginning July 1, 2027, the notice of tenant rights shall be made available to the public free of charge in electronic format on a website maintained by the department of commerce and consumer affairs."
- (2) Replace the language at Page 3, lines 18-21, with the following: "(c) The office of consumer protection shall review the notice of tenant rights no less than once every year to ensure the notice of tenant rights continues to provide current information consistent with applicable law."
- (3) Insert a \$30,000 general fund appropriation for costs associated with the publication of the Landlord-Tenant Handbook and the Notice of Tenant Rights, to include vendor translation services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



# 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  
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

April 7, 2026

## TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND COMMERCE

### Senate Bill 2347 Senate Draft 1 – Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of Senate Bill 2347 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. It is effective 7/1/2050.

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 Senate Bill 2347 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 SENATE BILL SENATE BILL 2347 SD1**  
RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD TENANT CODE

Ke Kōmike Hale o ka Ho‘omalū Mea Kemu a me ka ‘Oihana Kālepa  
(House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce)

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

‘Apelila 7, 2026

2:05 PM

Lumi 329

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Aloha e Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti , and Members of the House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce :

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) SUPPORTS **SB2347 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, language access challenges for multi-generational households, 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.

This measure strengthens housing stability by requiring the Office of Consumer Protection to develop, maintain, and regularly update a clear, standalone notice of tenant

rights, ensuring the notice is multilingual, accessible to persons with disabilities, and available in both print and electronic formats. Early access to accurate tenant information can help prevent avoidable displacement, reduce housing instability, and promote fairer landlord-tenant relationships statewide.


**OHA supports the original version of the bill, which required landlords to provide tenants with a written tenant rights notice copy.** 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. Too often, tenants only seek out guidance about their own rights and responsibilities after a costly and damaging court filing. Ensuring both tenants and landlords are informed prevents miscommunication and damaging displacement or court records.

OHA respectfully urges the Legislature to pass **SB2347 SD1**, which represents a modest but meaningful step toward improving housing stability, advancing language access, and ensuring that tenant protections established by law are meaningfully understood and applied by the people they are intended to serve.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



 808-733-7060  
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 1259 A'ala Street, Suite 300  
Honolulu, HI 96817

April 7, 2026

**The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair**

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 & Videoconference

**RE: Senate Bill 2347, SD1, Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code**

**HEARING: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 2:05 p.m.**

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Members of the Committee:

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 Senate Bill 2347, SD1, which requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights. Effective 7/1/2050.

With approximately 38% of Hawaii residents living in rental housing, the rental market plays a critical role in meeting the state's housing needs. 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.





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

April 7, 2026

House Committee on Consumer Protections & Commerce  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: SUPPORT for SB 2347 SD1 - RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL  
LANDLORD-TENANT CODE**

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

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of SB 2347 SD1**, 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.

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



**Hawai'i YIMBY**  
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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





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

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: April 7, 2026 at 2:05 PM (Room 329)

**Re: SUPPORT for SB 2347 HD 1, 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 **SB 2347 HD 1**, 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 SB 2347:

**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 SB 2347 HD 1.

/s/

Dina Shek

Legal Director

To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Re: **SB2347 SD1 – Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code**  
Hawai'i State Capitol & Via Videoconference  
April 7, 2026, 2:05 PM

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!, I am writing in **SUPPORT of SB2347 SD1**. This bill requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights.

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 translations<sup>1</sup> in many of the languages that are the most spoken by LEP families in Hawai'i<sup>2</sup> – 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."<sup>3</sup>

As one of the states with the highest portion of foreign-born residents,<sup>4</sup> 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

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

<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i Data Exchange Partnership, [https://hawaiidxp.org/quick\\_data/datastory/el](https://hawaiidxp.org/quick_data/datastory/el)

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

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



# HAWAII APPLESEED

## CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
**Support for SB2347 SD1– Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code**  
House Committee on Consumer Protections  
Tuesday, April 6, 2026 at 2:05AM Conf. Rm. 329 and via Videoconference

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Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and members of the committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB2347 SD1**, which would require the Office of Consumer Protection to publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenants rights and require a landlord to provide a tenant with a copy of the tenant rights. Clear communication of rights is a foundational step in promoting housing security and preventing exploitation or misunderstanding in landlord-tenant relationships.

Hawaii’s landlord-tenant code is a self-help system: it assumes tenants and landlords know the rights and responsibilities spelled out in HRS Chapter 521 and can act on them in civil court. Yet statutory duties—such as complying with rules ‘brought to the attention of the tenant’<sup>1</sup> at the start of the tenancy and providing proper notice of defects—resupposes that tenants can actually read and understand those rules.

National fair housing organizations have found that lack of meaningful language access prevents limited-English-proficient tenants from understanding leases, house rules, and hearing procedures, increasing the risk of losing housing because they never fully understood their rights or obligations.<sup>2</sup> By mandating *accessible* multilingual notices, SB2347 SD1 helps ensure that all tenants—regardless of language proficiency—are better equipped to understand and assert their rights under Hawai‘i’s landlord-tenant code.

Requiring landlords to provide this notice at the outset of tenancy promotes transparency and accountability. It helps foster a more balanced relationship between landlords and tenants, reducing the risk of disputes and misunderstandings. Best practices in tenant protection consistently highlight the value of proactive education and notification in reducing legal conflicts and improving housing outcomes for vulnerable populations.<sup>3</sup>

We respectfully recommend collaboration with community organizations in developing and disseminating these notices which could further enhance the reach and impact. We appreciate the Legislature’s attention to tenant rights and urge passage of this bill as a meaningful step toward a fairer, more just housing system in Hawai‘i.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol12\\_Ch0501-0588/HRS0521/HRS\\_0521-0052.htm](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol12_Ch0501-0588/HRS0521/HRS_0521-0052.htm)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nhlp.org/initiatives/fair-housing-housing-for-people-with-disabilities/language-access/>

<sup>3</sup>

<https://www.networkforphl.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Eviction-Diversion-and-Prevention-Programs.pdf>

**SB-2347-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2026 1:04:37 PM

Testimony for CPC on 4/7/2026 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Maui Housing Hui	Maui Housing Hui	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Committee

**FROM:** Maui Housing Hui

**RE:** SB2347, Relating to the Office of Consumer Protection and Notice of Tenant Rights

**POSITION:** Support with Suggested Amendment

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **support** of SB2347, Relating to the Office of Consumer Protection and Notice of Tenant Rights. SB2347 requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights, helping ensure that renters receive clear, standardized information about their basic protections under Hawai‘i law. As the companion to HB1776, this measure forms part of a broader tenant-protection package moving through the Legislature this year.

## **Importance of a Notice of Tenant Rights**

Roughly forty percent of Hawai‘i residents are renters, and many struggle to navigate an already complex and technical landlord-tenant code. The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs receives thousands of landlord-tenant inquiries each year, which underscores how confusing the law can be even for people who are actively seeking information. In practice, tenants often only learn about their rights when they are already in crisis—facing eviction, steep rent increases, or disputes over deposits or repairs—at which point the information is much harder to use as a preventive tool.

By requiring the Office of Consumer Protection to prepare and update an official notice of tenant rights, SB2347 creates a single, trusted document that summarizes key protections in plain language. Making that notice multilingual and accessible acknowledges the linguistic diversity of Hawai‘i’s renters, including many who speak English as a second language or who rely on family members or community organizations to interpret legal materials. This is a practical, low-cost way to reduce confusion tenants and landlords and improve compliance with the law.

## **Need for Landlord Delivery and Tenant Language Access**

As originally conceived, this policy was paired with a requirement that landlords provide each tenant with the most recent notice of tenant rights at the time of lease signing, including in the tenant's preferred language where that version is available, along with fines for landlords that fail to comply. That delivery requirement is essential to the bill's effectiveness: a notice that exists only on a website or in a government office will not reach the tenants who need it most. Tenants are already expected to navigate rental applications, background checks, and complex lease terms, ususally with no legal assistance. Asking them to also track down their rights on their own simply replicates the status quo.

For that reason, this testimony respectfully urges the Committee to restore the earlier language requiring landlords to provide tenants with a copy of the most recent notice of tenant rights, in the tenant's preferred language when that version is available, and to subject landlords to a fine when they fail to do so. Similar to other consumer-protection schemes—such as adverse action notices under federal fair credit reporting law—making the notice mandatory and in writing is what ensures that rights are real, not just theoretical. The written notice also helps landlords document their own compliance and avoid disputes later on.

## **Justification and Broader Context**

Hawai'i's landlord-tenant laws currently place considerable responsibility on renters to monitor their housing conditions, identify violations, and affirmatively invoke legal protections, often against much more sophisticated or well-resourced landlords. Even basic questions—such as notice periods, deposit return timelines, or procedures for addressing habitability issues—require tenants to locate, read, and understand multiple sections of statute and agency guidance. For many households working multiple jobs, caring for family members, or living in unstable conditions, that is not a realistic expectation.

SB2347, particularly with restored landlord-delivery and language-access requirements, is a modest but meaningful step toward rebalancing that dynamic. Providing a clear, multilingual notice at the signing of each lease:

- Gives tenants a simple, at-a-glance resource that they can refer back to over the life of the tenancy.
- Encourages earlier, more informed communication between landlords and tenants by clarifying baseline rights and responsibilities.
- Supports other tenant-protection efforts advancing this session, including measures to prevent displacement and strengthen due process in eviction.

This measure is also consistent with a national trend toward improving transparency in rental relationships and ensuring that tenants receive key notices in writing, not just informally or by word of mouth. It is a small, low-hanging-fruit reform that can help reduce preventable conflicts, support voluntary compliance, and make existing protections more accessible to the people they are meant to serve. The status quo weaponizes ignorance of both landlords and tenants, reducing housing stability in a time of crisis. Tenants hold more responsibility in navigating these processes on their own to hold landlords accountable to the landlord tenant code during conflict, and this bill will create more equity in the landlord tenant relationship.

# Request

For these reasons, this testimony respectfully urges the Committee to:

1. Pass SB2347 out of committee; and
2. Amend the bill to restore the original language requiring landlords to:
  - Provide tenants with the most recent notice of tenant rights at lease signing;
  - Provide that notice in a tenant's preferred language when a translated version is available; and
  - Be subject to an appropriate fine if they fail to comply.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your work to strengthen tenant protections in Hawai'i.

Maui Housing Hui



COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

HEARING: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 2:05 pm, Via Videoconference and Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2347, SD1 - RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL  
LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, 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 SB 2347, 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 SB 2347, SD1**, and to vote to pass it out of this committee.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Veronica'.

Veronica Mendoza

Maui Roots Reborn, *Founding Executive Director*

El Pueblo en Accion Maui, *Founding Coalition Member*

**SB-2347-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 11:57:32 AM

Testimony for CPC on 4/7/2026 2:05:00 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 writing in **strong support** of SB2347, which requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights.

**The Problem: Knowledge Is Power—And Too Many Renters Lack It**

Hawai‘i's Residential Landlord-Tenant Code is complex and not well understood by many participants in the State's rental market. This lack of understanding leaves tenants vulnerable to exploitation, landlords vulnerable to unintentional violations, and both parties vulnerable to costly disputes.

For non-English-speaking residents, the challenge is even greater. Important legal notices and rental documents are often provided only in English, creating barriers for tenants whose primary language is not English. For individuals with disabilities, standard written notices may be entirely inaccessible, violating federal fair housing requirements and state law.

The consequences of this information gap are real. Tenants may unknowingly waive their rights, fail to respond properly to eviction notices, or miss deadlines that could cost them their homes. Landlords may face fines and legal liability for violations they did not know they were committing. The courts become clogged with disputes that better information could have prevented.

**What SB2347 Does**

This bill takes a straightforward, cost-effective approach to these problems. It requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights. The Office already publishes a Landlord-Tenant Handbook that is available in digital or physical form. This bill builds on that existing resource by ensuring that tenants receive a clear, accessible, multilingual summary of their rights—not just a lengthy handbook they may never see or read.

The notice will be accessible, meaning it will be designed to reach tenants with disabilities who may require alternative formats such as large print, email, audio, or additional response time. It

will be multilingual, meaning tenants who do not speak English as their primary language will have access to information about their rights in a language they understand.

### **Why This Matters Now**

The need for tenant education has never been greater. Hawai‘i faces a severe housing crisis, with skyrocketing rents, limited supply, and a growing population of renters who are one missed paycheck away from homelessness.

A new statewide pre-eviction mediation pilot program went into effect in February 2026, requiring landlords to participate in mediation before filing eviction notices for nonpayment of rent. Early data shows promising results—on Hawai‘i Island, four out of four cases mediated successfully, with three tenants staying in their homes and one moving out without eviction.

But mediation and other tenant protections are only effective if tenants know they exist. A tenant who does not know they have the right to request mediation, or who cannot read the notice informing them of that right, cannot exercise it. SB2347 ensures that tenants receive clear, accessible information about their rights before problems arise—when prevention is still possible.

An informed tenant is an empowered tenant. An informed landlord is a compliant landlord. SB2347 provides a simple, low-cost tool to ensure that both parties understand their rights and responsibilities under Hawai‘i law. By making tenant rights information accessible, multilingual, and widely available, this bill will reduce disputes, prevent evictions, and strengthen landlord-tenant relationships across our state.

I urge this committee to pass SB2347.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Rep. Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair

Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

HEARING: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 2:05 pm, Via Videoconference and Conference Room 329

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2347, SD1 - RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Grandinetti, 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 SB 2347, SD1**, Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code, a commonsense measure that requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights.

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 SB 2347, 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, and more recently, by the devastating impacts of the kona low flooding. 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 in a language of proficiency is vital to protect some of our most vulnerable friends and neighbors. Senate Bill 2347, SD1 is a past-due measure to protect all community members who are navigating the Landlord-Tenant relationship.

Mahalo nui,

Christine Andrews, J.D.

Wailuku, Maui