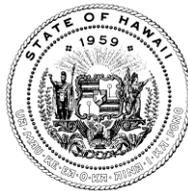


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**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: 1-844-808-DCCA (3222)
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

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

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
Tuesday, February 3, 2026
9:31 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

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

Chair Keohokalole 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 and concerns.

The purpose of this bill is to require OCP to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights and require that landlords provide tenants with a copy of the notice of tenant rights at or before the time the tenant signs a rental agreement. OCP currently publishes the Landlord-Tenant Handbook (LT Handbook), and we re-publish in response to changes to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code. As the Committee is aware, changes happen nearly every legislative session. A digital copy of the LT Handbook is available for free on our website, and written copies may be purchased or mailed.

We recently began exploring ways to make the LT Handbook more accessible,

starting by focusing on the 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.

We have concerns, however, about requiring a second resource to be published in addition to the existing LT Handbook. 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 effectively replicate these same procedures for drafting, reviewing, approving, and publishing, thereby increasing staff workload. We 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 language access, we have inquired about obtaining translation services for the LT Handbook. While we do not have the quoted translation costs readily available, we can follow up with the Committee as needed on the costs of translation services.

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 by the April 24, 2026 deadline under the Department of Justice's final rule updating its regulations for Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Department's goal is to complete this accessibility review by the end of the first quarter of 2026.

While we support the intent of this bill to enhance public awareness of tenant rights, we are concerned that requiring a separate publication would duplicate existing efforts and strain current resources.

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)

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February 3, 2026

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

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

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports the intent of Senate Bill 2347 – 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. Requires a landlord to provide a tenant with a copy of the notice of tenant rights.

DCAB frequently receives questions from landlords and 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristine Pagano

KRISTINE PAGANO
Acting Executive Director

February 3, 2026

The Honorable Jarett Keohokalole, Chair

Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

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

HEARING: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, at 9:31 a.m.

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, 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 provides **comments** on Senate Bill 2347, which requires the Office of Consumer Protection to periodically publish an accessible, multilingual notice of tenant rights. Requires a landlord to provide a tenant with a copy of the notice of tenant rights.

With approximately 38% of Hawaii residents living in rental housing, the rental market plays a critical role in meeting the State's housing needs. Currently, the Office of Consumer Protection offers a "*Handbook for the Hawaii Residential-Landlord-Tenant Code*"¹ designed to be a guide for all Hawaii residents in addressing questions and concerns most frequently expressed by housing providers and tenants.

In 2025, the Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 123, HD1, which established 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 HAR believes the issues addressed in this measure would be an important topic for discussion by the Working Group, especially as it deals with education for both housing providers and tenants in better understanding the Landlord-Tenant Code.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Office of Consumer Protection. (November 2024). Handbook for the Hawaii Residential-Landlord-Tenant Code. <https://cca.hawaii.gov/ocp/files/2024/12/2024-Landlord-Tenant-Handbook-Final.pdf>



HAWAII APPLESEED

CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

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Testimony of the Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB2347 – Relating to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Code
Senate Committee on Consumer Protections
Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 9:31AM Conf. Rm. 415 and via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of SB2347**, 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’¹ 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.² By mandating *accessible* multilingual notices, SB2347 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.³

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.

¹ https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol12_Ch0501-0588/HRS0521/HRS_0521-0052.htm

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

³

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



COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & CONSUMER PROTECTION

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair
Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Hearing Date: February 3, 2026 at 9:31AM (Room 229)

Re: SUPPORT for SB 2347, 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**, 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.

I humbly add that the provisions of SB 2347 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.

/s/

Dina Shek
Legal Director



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Hawai'i YIMBY

Honolulu, HI 96814

hawaiiyimby.org

info@hawaiiyimby.org

February 3, 2026

Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protections

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, HI 96813

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

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

On behalf of Hawai'i YIMBY, we are writing in **support of SB 2347**, 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 requiring landlords to provide that notice to tenants at the time a lease is signed.

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 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



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

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



SB-2347

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 7:25:30 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2347 SB RELATING TO THE RESIDENTIAL LANDLORD-TENANT CODE.	CPN	CR 229 & Videoconference	Feb 3, 2026 9:31 AM
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SB-2347

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:09:22 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this important accessibility bill for renters. This bill would ensure tenants have accessible written explanation of their rights in multiple languages, strengthening housing security by providing an accessible understanding of the landlord tenant code. The bill provides rights information at the start of tenancy and promotes transparency and accountability, helping to prevent disputes, exploitation, and misunderstandings. Mahalo for your consideration.

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SB-2347

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 4:17:06 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill:

- Ensures tenants have accessible written explanation of their rights in multiple languages.
- Strengthens housing security by providing an accessible understanding of the landlord tenant code.
- Provides rights information at the start of tenancy and promotes transparency and accountability, helping to prevent disputes, exploitation, and misunderstandings.

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SB-2347

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 7:27:48 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/3/2026 9:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pua Auyong-White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To: Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Relating to the Residential Landlord Tenant Code: Renter Protections

- Support and Requires the office of consumer protection to publish accessible, multilingual notice of tenants rights and requires a landlord to provide a tenant with a copy.