



**STATE HEALTH PLANNING
AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH - KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'AINA O KA MOKU'AINA 'O HAWAII

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March 23, 2026

TO: HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS
Representative Lisa Marten, Chair
Representative Ikaika Olds, Vice Chair
Honorable Members

FROM: John C. (Jack) Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA, and Sr. Advisor to
Governor Josh Green, MD on Healthcare Innovation

RE: **SB 2557-SD1 -- RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

HEARING: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 @ 10:00 am; Conference Room 329

POSITION: SUPPORT with COMMENTS

Testimony:

SHPDA strongly supports SB 2557-SD1, with comments.

This bill is intended to strengthen accountability and transparency for the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions by clarifying and expanding its reporting requirements to the Legislature. To support effective legislative oversight, this bill requires consistent reporting on sheltered and unsheltered homelessness counts, housing placements, kauhale performance, and detailed contract and coordination activities tied to reducing homelessness statewide.

This bill benefits the State by creating a clearer, more consistent way to measure what's working and what needs to change, so resources can be directed to approaches that actually move people into stable housing. By requiring more information on kauhale operations, and contract performance outcomes, the bill supports better program management and continuous improvement rather than decisions based on anecdotes. These added details could help policymakers compare strategies over time and across communities, identify service and housing inventory gaps, and make more informed budget and policy choices to reduce homelessness.

In closing, this bill moves Hawai'i toward a results-driven approach to addressing homelessness by ensuring decision-makers have reliable, comparable information to guide improvements. With clearer reporting on program operations participant outcomes, and contractor performance, the Legislature can better target resources, strengthen what works, and course-correct where needed. We defer to DHS and

SB 2557-SD1: testimony of SHPDA (2026), continued.

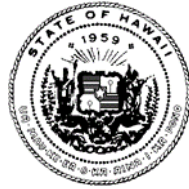
other state agencies involved in homelessness and houseless populations on the specifics, details and costs associated to this bill.

Thank you for hearing SB 2557-SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA

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TRISTA SPEER
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March 23, 2026

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

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2557 S.D. 1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: March 24, 2026, Time 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 329 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

AGENCY'S POSITION: The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) appreciates the intent of the bill and provides comments. The purpose of this bill is to clarify reporting duties and responsibilities for SOHHS relating to: the number of people experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness; the number of people placed into permanent housing arrangements; additional information regarding Kauhale project contracts and plans or proposals to enhance the Kauhale project; and actions and outcomes made by SOHHS to coordinate with other public and private sector organizations to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in the state. The bill adds new or clarified reporting requirements to the existing annual reports due to the legislature. The S.D. 1 added further reporting requirements.

SOHHS's annual reports required by Sections 346-381 and 346-381, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) and Act 309, Session Laws of Hawai'i (SLH) are available on the Department of Human Services (DHS) at <https://humanservices.hawaii.gov/reports/>. Additional information relating to the activities of the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH), including

presentations and published reports, is available at <https://homelessness.hawaii.gov/hich/hich-reports/>.

The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count, conducted by the Continuum of Care (CoC) organizations for O‘ahu and the neighbor island counties, is an important tool to measure homelessness at any given time. The 2024 PIT Count identified approximately 6,392 individuals experiencing homelessness statewide, an increase of approximately 2.7% (166 individuals) since 2023, excluding households residing in Non-Congregate Shelter (NCS) programs on Maui. Approximately 70% (4,494 individuals) of individuals experiencing homelessness during the 2024 PIT Count resided on O‘ahu. While the number of individuals experiencing homelessness on O‘ahu increased by approximately 12% (466 individuals) from 2023 to 2024, homelessness in the counties of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai decreased by a combined 14% (300 individuals.) SOHHS remains committed to implementing and advancing innovative solutions to ending homelessness in Hawai‘i.

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

JOSH B. GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA
MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I



KATHERINE AUMER, PhD
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
LUNA HO'OMALU O KA PAPA



STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
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STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the
House Committee on Human Services and Homelessness
In SUPPORT of S.B. 2557 S.D.1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS
March 24, 2026 10:00 a.m., Room 329 and Video

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Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Committee Members:

HRS §334-10 established the State Council on Mental Health (“Council”) as a 21-member body. It advises on resource allocation, statewide needs, and programs affecting more than one county. It advocates for adults with serious mental illness, children with emotional disturbances, and individuals with co-occurring substance abuse disorders. Members represent mental health providers and recipients, students, youth, parents, and family members. State agency representatives from mental health, judiciary, housing, Medicaid, social services, vocational rehabilitation, and education serve the Council. Members also include representatives from the Hawaii Advisory Commission on Drug Abuse and Controlled Substances and county service area boards.

Most Council members support this measure, which aims to improve reporting, accountability, and progress toward ending homelessness statewide. To advance this shared goal, the Council underscores that homelessness is not only a housing issue, but also a health and poverty issue.

For individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring behavioral health conditions, recovery and stability depend on placements that match each person’s level of care and support needs. Recovery occurs along a continuum of care that must be paired with a corresponding continuum of housing solutions. Placement aligned with service needs is essential to achieving and sustaining recovery.

Past Point-in-Time counts and related data show a significant number of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness with behavioral health needs, indicating that placement alone may not support long-term stability.

To strengthen this measure while preserving flexibility for implementation, the Council offers the following amendment:

On page 3, lines 12–16 of the bill, **amend proposed Section 346-388(4), Hawaii Revised Statutes, to read in part:**

(4) Report annually on the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and the number of individuals who have been placed in permanent housing, supportive housing, and in permanent or independent living arrangements[, “and, to the extent practicable and in collaboration with relevant agencies, data on individuals experiencing homelessness with serious mental illness or co-occurring behavioral health conditions, including placement type and housing outcomes.”]

Thank you for the opportunity to offer this testimony and amendment.

SB-2557-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 2:04:20 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/24/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Lenzer Medeiros	PABEA: Policy Advisory Board Elderly Affairs	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am in strong support of SB 2557. Although I am a member of the PABEA board, these comments do not necessarily represent the views of the executive office on aging.

I represent West Hawaii, I live in Kona. The comments I am making apply to every community Of vulnerable seniors.

The most important things having to do with a study of homeless situations at a state government level, brings several things to mind. We are hopeful that this office on homeless will...

1. Advocate for currently funded homeless services. The legislature has been very generous in past years to study this. Coordination between nonprofits and the counties seems vital if we are to find real solutions.

2. Build support for system review/asset mapping by state and county what's available for unsheltered at risk seniors on each Island. Specifically to evaluate where gaps exist and how they can be filled. Perhaps a resolution? A request to these agencies to conduct a internal review? The gaps are very real, and present real

problems for vulnerable seniors and their families, just looking for help.

3. Support “no wrong door“ by additional funds for training of those in direct contact currently at risk seniors. Not just here is some information...you are on your own...

4. Cultivate a supportive, sensitive and dignified environment in our communities regarding unsheltered and at risk seniors.

On Hawaii Island, and I assume at the other islands as well there are quite a few services available for seniors, but there exists many gaps. I have found talking with my contacts who are “grass roots“ kind of people that there is a lot of reluctance to get help partly because of not knowing what to do. And of course, the stigma of asking for help. We know you are such a great advocate for seniors, and we

SB-2557-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2026 3:25:01 PM

Testimony for HSH on 3/24/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jillian Anderson	Waikiki Neighborhood Board	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Waikiki Neighborhood Board SUPPORTS SB2557, and on behalf of our community, urges its passage by the House Committee on Human Services and Health.

Despite a growing amount of resources being allocated to addressing homelessness, unfortunately the problem continues to worsen in many communities, including Waikiki. The passage of SB2557 would provide our state with valuable data to determine what initiatives are proving effective and which are not. Further, the requirement to report coordination between the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions with county, state, or federal agencies, and private or nonprofit organizations, will allow us to have a better idea of where we may be experiencing gaps or where we have found the opportunity to merge previously duplicative efforts.

Mahalo for your strong consideration of this measure and the opportunity to support its merits.