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KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
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March 2, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2557 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: March 3, 2026, Time 10:17 a.m.  
Conference Room 211 & 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.

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) website 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.



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

**JOSH GREEN, MD**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII

**KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'ŌKELE

**JOHN C. (JACK) LEWIN, MD**  
ADMINISTRATOR

March 2, 2026

**TO:** SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, 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 -- RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

**HEARING:** Tuesday, March 3, 2026 @ 10:17 am; Conference Room 211

**POSITION:** SUPPORT with COMMENTS

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Testimony:

SHPDA supports SB 2557, 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.

SB 2557 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 other

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

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

Thank you for hearing SB 2557.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

■ -- Jack Lewin, MD, Administrator, SHPDA

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**SB-2557**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:45:10 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2026 10:17:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jillian Anderson	Testifying for 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 Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

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, or 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.

**SB-2557**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 2:51:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2026 10:17:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara Lenzer Medeiros	Individual	Support	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 appreciate your time and efforts on our often marginalized population of homeless/unsheltered seniors.

Thank you for your contributions,

Sara Lenzer Medeiros

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**SB-2557**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 7:29:25 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2026 10:17:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. Christopher Knightsbridge	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill as it will greatly help in our ongoing battle against homelessness.