

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**

P.O. Box 3378, Room 256
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**STATE COUNCIL ON MENTAL HEALTH
Testimony to the
House Committee on Finance
In SUPPORT of S.B. 2803 SD1 HD1
RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS
April 7, 2026, 2:00 p.m., Room 308 and Video**

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Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 strengthens statewide governance by consolidating the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions with the Homeless Programs Office. This consolidation enhances accountability, reduces fragmentation, and improves coordination among agencies working to end homelessness.

Importantly, SB2803 SD1 HD1 more explicitly incorporates behavioral health needs and co-occurring conditions into the State’s homelessness response. For individuals with serious mental illness and co-occurring behavioral health conditions, recovery and stability depend on placement that matches their level of care and support needs. Recovery

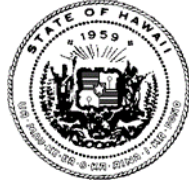
occurs along a continuum of care that must be matched by a corresponding continuum of housing options. Aligning service needs and housing is critical to achieving and sustaining long-term recovery and stability.

Data from past Point-in-Time counts and related sources show many individuals experiencing chronic homelessness also have behavioral health needs. This underscores that placement alone without appropriate services is insufficient to support lasting outcomes.

SB2803 SD1 HD1 better positions the State to deliver integrated responses that can end homelessness. For this, the Council supports the measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



RYAN I. YAMANE
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA
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TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

April 6, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance

SUBJECT: **SB 2803 SD1 HD1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.**

Hearing: April 7, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference, State Capitol

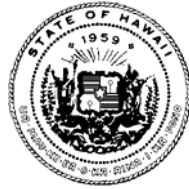
DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) appreciates the bill's intent and offers comments on the request to submit a plan to reorganize and consolidate homeless services and establish a data collection office. DHS defers to the State Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) regarding the proposed reporting requirements and appropriations for Kauhale and the office's administrative expenses.

The bill requires the submission of a draft consolidation plan and timeline prior to the Regular Session of 2027 and a final consolidation plan and timeline prior to the Regular Session of 2028. The HD1 added in Section 1, paragraph (4) to the plan on data sharing to include the continuum of housing solutions aligned with the continuum of behavioral health care needs. DHS notes that the continuum behavioral health services are not currently within the purview of SOHHS or HPO.

DHS will need time to fully assess and develop a comprehensive plan and may likely require more than the allotted six months to consider available options. As such, DHS emphasizes that the report and plan must be flexible, focusing on the "timeline for the reorganization, as well as recommendations" for individual components.

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

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TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

April 6, 2026

TO: The Honorable Representative Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2803 S.D. 1, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: April 7, 2026, Time 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions (SOHHS) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers comments. This bill requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to submit a reorganization plan to the legislature to consolidate SOHHS with the Homeless Programs Office (HPO), and amends existing reporting requirements under Section 346-389, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS). The S.D. 1 changed the sums appropriated to the department for the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered persons (HONU) program and the A'ala Medical Respite programs, the administration of the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) and SOHHS operating expenses, and general obligation bonds for the Kauhale Initiative and related capital improvement projects to unspecified amounts. The S.D. 1 also requires DHS to submit a draft consolidation plan and timeline prior to the commencement of the 2027 legislative session and a final consolidation plan and timeline prior to the commencement of the 2028 legislative session. The H.D. 1 requires the consolidated entity to align its data sharing and collaboration plans with the continuum of behavioral health needs, and to report whether housing placements made by homeless service providers are appropriately matched to a household's

service needs.

SOHHS appreciates the legislature's support for critical programs for unsheltered individuals on O'ahu and the administrative expenses required to manage these programs. Approximately 70% (4,494 individuals) of individuals experiencing homelessness during the 2024 PIT Count resided on O'ahu.

The HONU program is a mobile, low-barrier triage program designed to navigate unsheltered individuals to other appropriate settings, including shelters, kauhale, permanent housing, family reunification, and relocation. The program has recently expanded its capacity to serve approximately 60-80 individuals at any time and serves approximately 230 individuals each quarter. The A'ala Medical Respite program includes capacity for up to 62 individuals, including individuals requiring 24-hour supervision due to medical needs. The program combines intensive medical respite beds with a surrounding kauhale village to provide residents with a place to recover from health issues and work toward independence. The model is based on recommendations from the first medical respite kauhale at Pūlama Ola, a temporary program that operated outside of Washington Place from May through December 2023. The program has served over 245 individuals since July 2024. Appropriations pursuant to this bill will support the ongoing operations of these programs through State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2027, with the potential to further extend if cost savings are realized. SOHHS respectfully requests a sum of \$8,000,000 to support both programs through SFY 2027.

The appropriation of funds for costs related to the HICH and other office administrative functions will allow SOHHS to continue its statewide policy and planning mandates, including facilitating HICH meetings and producing reports, continuing the development of a data clearinghouse and related reporting, and monitoring existing programs. SOHHS respectfully requests a sum of \$308,000 to support the HICH and office administrative expenses through SFY 2027.

The appropriation of general obligation bonds will support the development of additional or expanded kauhale sites, including potential locations in central and leeward O'ahu to address unmet housing needs. For a description of current and planned kauhale projects on all four major islands, see the [Act 309, Session Laws of Hawai'i \(SLH\) SFY 2026 Q2 Report on Kauhale and 'Ohana Zones Programs](#). The creation of additional kauhale sites is consistent with

recommendations in SOHHS's [Comprehensive Needs Assessment](#), conducted pursuant to Act 309, SLH 2025. Increasing the inventory of deeply affordable, low-barrier residential facilities where people experiencing unsheltered homelessness can heal from trauma and transform their lives will improve future housing stability and upward mobility. SOHHS respectfully requests a sum of \$10,100,000 in general obligation bonds to support the development of additional or expanded kauhale sites.

SOHHS defers to DHS on the timeframe to develop a reorganization plan to consolidate SOHHS and HPO. We appreciate the legislature's consideration of the need for additional time for DHS to prepare a plan and timeline for consolidation. SOHHS remains committed to leading the State's efforts to implement innovative solutions to ending homelessness in Hawai'i.

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



www.AlohaILHawaii.org

Apr 7, 2026

MISSION

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) dedicated to providing independent living programs and services for persons with disabilities in Hawaii.

We work together with the community and consumers to improve the quality of life through individual choices and access to services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Roxanne U. Bolden

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The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair
House Committee on Finance
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

SUBJECT: Support for SB2803 SD1 HD1 – Relating to Homelessness

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Independent Living Hawaii (AILH) is a cross-disability, community-based Center for Independent Living that supports people with disabilities statewide to live in the community of their choice, with control over their own services and supports. People with disabilities are disproportionately represented in Hawaii's homeless population and are deeply affected by how our homelessness system is organized, funded, and evaluated.

SB2803 SD1 HD1 requires the Department of Human Services to submit a reorganization plan consolidating the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions with the Homeless Programs Office into a single, centralized entity, including a dedicated data collection office and clear reporting requirements to the Legislature. A consolidated entity with strong data capacity can strengthen coordinated entry, reduce duplication, and help people move more quickly from streets and shelters into permanent homes matched to their service needs, including disabled residents who often have the most complex barriers.

From a Finance perspective, SB2803 SD1 HD1 ties substantial existing and new investments—including operating funds for contract management and statewide coordination, and general obligation bonds for the Kauhale Initiative and related capital improvement projects—to transparent performance reporting on kauhale outcomes, contracts, and movement



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along the “housing ladder.” Better data on who is being served, lengths of stay, costs per person, and housing outcomes will help ensure that homelessness dollars actually translate into stable, integrated housing, rather than fragmented services that are hard for disabled people and other high-need groups to navigate.

AILH supports the appropriations and bond authorizations in SB2803 SD1 HD1 with the understanding that kauhale and all homeless services will be designed and operated in ways that uphold consumer choice, accessibility, and community integration, consistent with the independent living philosophy and the spirit of the Olmstead decision. We respectfully urge the Committee on Finance to pass SB2803 SD1 HD1 and to maintain strong planning, data, and reporting provisions tied to homelessness funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Roxanne Bolden

Executive Director

SB-2803-HD-1

Submitted on: 4/3/2026 10:27:04 PM

Testimony for FIN on 4/7/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, COMMENT NO KAUAHALE ON DHHL LANDS.

2803 SB RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.