

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
Office of the Director
P. O. Box 339
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

TRISTA SPEER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

February 12, 2026

TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Ryan I. Yamane, Director

SUBJECT: SB 2803 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

Hearing: February 13, 2025, 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & 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 appropriations for Kauhale and the office's administrative expenses.

DHS is pleased to report that SOHHS established quarterly meetings with the Homeless Program Office (HPO), Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation (HHFDC), and Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) to ensure that the State's response to homelessness is coordinated.

The bill requires the submission of a plan by January 1, 2027, to reorganize and consolidate SOHHS and HPO into one office; establish a data collection office within the consolidated entity; and other requirements. 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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TO: The Honorable Senator San Buenaventura, Chair
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Jun D. Yang, Coordinator on Homelessness

SUBJECT: **SB 2803 – RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: February 13, 2026, Time 1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 225 & Via Videoconference, State Capitol

AGENCY'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 bill also appropriates the following sums to the department: \$8,000,000 for contracts with the City and County of Honolulu for the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered persons (HONU) program and the A'ala Medical Respite program; \$308,000 for the administration of the Hawai'i Interagency Council on Homelessness (HICH) and SOHHS operating expenses; and \$10,100,000 in general obligation bonds for the Kauhale Initiative and related capital improvement projects.

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 serves approximately 40 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.

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.

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 defers to DHS on the timeframe to develop a reorganization plan to consolidate SOHHS and HPO. 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.

SB-2803

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 2:31:30 AM

Testimony for HHS on 2/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn M Golojuch	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

As Founder and President of Rainbow Family 808, I strongly support SB2803. Since 2013, Rainbow Family 808 has supported the nutritional needs of the underage student clients of RYSE (Residential Youth Services Empowerment). We are a small local Non-Profit dedicated to the Homeless Youth.

As a social worker, I am aware of the cycle of Homelessness that left unaddressed can become Homeless Adults. This is a plight on our society and our culture. I was made aware of hunger at the age of 5 years old when my mom told me that in our country No One should be hungry. These wise words led me to establish Rainbow Family 808. There is a need across our islands to feed our Homeless Youth. My dream is to expand Rainbow Family 808 to all our islands.

Today I met a sales person who shared with me that her parents threw her out of the family home when she was 16. She's a Survivor today. This is my vision for Hawai'i that all of our Homeless Youth become Survivors. SB 2803 is a step in the correct direction.

Please pass SB2803 ASAP for the benefit of our children. As it's been said, "Our keiki are our future."

Thank you,

Carolyn Martinez Golojuch, Semi-Retired MSW

SB-2803

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 8:04:30 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB2803. Please pass this important bill.

Mike Golojuch, Sr.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KAIĀULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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LATE

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR
PO'O

AEDWARD LOS BANOS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

TESTIMONY OF ANTON C. KRUCKY
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Friday, February 13, 2026, 01:00 PM
Conference RM 225 and Via Videoconference

TO: Sen. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair, Sen. Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

RE: SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2803

The Department of Community Services (DCS), City and County of Honolulu (City), **strongly supports Senate Bill 2803**, particularly the provisions appropriating funding for the Homeless Outreach and Navigation for Unsheltered Persons (HONU) program, the A'ala Respite (AMR) program, and the expansion of the kauhale initiatives.

The City greatly values its partnership with the State in addressing homelessness, which remains one of the most complex challenges facing our community. The HONU and AMR programs have become critical components of O'ahu's crisis response system, helping connect unsheltered individuals with immediate services, stabilization resources, and pathways to housing. These are just two successful programs that advance a coordinated, data-driven and compassionate response that prioritizes stabilization, treatment, and long-term housing outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness.

These programs play an essential role in reducing strain on emergency medical systems, improving public health and safety outcomes, and providing compassionate, trauma-informed engagement for individuals experiencing homelessness. Equally important, these programs recognize the humanity and dignity of each individual served, ensuring outreach efforts are culturally responsive, respectful, and centered on building trust with individuals who often face complex medical, behavioral health, and social challenges.

Together the joint City and State investments have made measurable progress in expanding system capacity and improving successful placements into shelter and housing. Between Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, the City and its partners achieved an increase of 937 additional beds compared to Fiscal Years 2022–2023, that include specialized beds and services that address the root causes of homelessness.

The proposed appropriation of \$8,000,000 to support these programs is vital to sustaining and strengthening this collaborative work, while the \$10,100,000 will help this network that will allow both the City and State gain functional control over this complex social issue.

The City appreciates the Legislature's recognition that addressing homelessness requires strong partnerships and shared responsibility across jurisdictions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of this measure.

LATE

Testimony on SB2803- Relating to Homelessness
Senate Committee Hearing

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Lerishane Enriquez, I am a Master of Social Work (MSW) student in Hawai'i. I am sharing comments on SB2803 because homelessness is an issue that I continue to learn about through my education and field experiences, and I recognize how closely it connects to health, mental health, and overall well-being in our communities.

As a social work student, I am learning how many individuals experiencing homelessness are navigating several systems at once, including healthcare, social services, and housing programs. The proposal to consolidate the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homelessness Programs Office under one centralized entity may help improve communication between programs and make services feel less overwhelming for people trying to access support. When agencies communicate more effectively, it can make it easier for individuals and families to navigate services and access the support they need.

I also appreciate the focus on data collection and reporting in this measure. From what I am learning in my program, combining data with lived experiences can help guide more informed and equitable decisions. I hope that any implementation continues to prioritize trauma-informed and culturally responsive approaches, especially considering the diverse communities across Hawai'i.

As a student learning about policy and advocacy, this measure highlights the importance of systems-level approaches to addressing homelessness. I encourage ongoing consideration of how centralized coordination and initiatives like the kauhale model can support long-term stability and housing pathways for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my perspective. Thank you for your continued work supporting our communities.

Respectfully,
Lerishane Enriquez
MSW Student
Ewa Beach, HI

LATE

SB-2803

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 5:46:55 PM

Testimony for HHS on 2/13/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Garrison Gamil	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong support of SB2803.

Individuals experiencing homelessness often face overwhelming barriers when trying to access assistance. Navigating multiple offices, programs, eligibility requirements, and intake processes can be confusing and discouraging—especially for those already coping with trauma, health challenges, or instability. When the system is fragmented, people fall through the cracks.

SB2803’s effort to consolidate homelessness services within the Department of Human Services—bringing together the Statewide Office on Homelessness and Housing Solutions and the Homeless Programs Office—is a practical and necessary step toward reducing that confusion. A centralized structure will create clearer pathways to shelter, outreach, navigation services, and housing support. It will make it easier for individuals to understand where to go for help and for service providers to coordinate their efforts effectively.

By improving coordination, accountability, and data reporting, this bill will help identify service gaps more quickly and ensure resources are used efficiently. Most importantly, it will simplify access to critical services, allowing individuals and families to move more quickly from crisis to stability.

Homelessness is a complex issue, but navigating the system should not be. SB2803 moves Hawai‘i toward a more streamlined, accessible, and compassionate approach.

I also wholeheartedly believe that additional space, resources, care and staffing should be included within this bill. Having these additional resources supports the system and ensures that all individuals that seek help will have greater success.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge passage of SB2803.

Mahalo for your consideration.