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STATE OF HAWAII
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HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
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IN REPLY PLEASE REFER TO:

26:OED

Statement of the
Hawaii Public Housing Authority

Before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AND
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Tuesday, February 10, 2026
1:00 PM – Room 225, Hawaii State Capitol

In consideration of
**SB 2866
RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING**

Honorable Chair Chang, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the Senate Committee on Housing, and Senate Committee on Health and Human Services:

The Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) supports Senate Bill (SB) 2866 which repeals the sunset for the State Rent Supplement Program (RSP) for Kupuna and appropriates funds to continue the program, including staffing to ensure its effective administration.

HPHA appreciates the Legislature's continued commitment to this important program and would welcome the opportunity to make the State RSP for Kupuna a permanent resource for at-risk kupuna across Hawaii. The program has proven to be a targeted and cost-effective tool in preventing eviction and homelessness among elderly residents living on fixed incomes. By providing modest rental assistance, the program helps kupuna remain stably housed in their communities and avoid the far greater social and fiscal costs associated with displacement and homelessness.

Stable access to safe and affordable housing plays a critical role in supporting the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of our kupuna. Reducing housing cost burdens helps alleviate financial stress and contributes to improved mental and physical health outcomes, allowing seniors to age in place with dignity and stability.



HPHA also supports the bill's provision for staffing resources to administer the program. Permanent authorization and staffing will allow HPHA to operate the program efficiently, ensure timely assistance to participants, and provide consistent coordination with landlords and service providers statewide.

HPHA looks forward to continuing to work with the Legislature and other partners to address Hawaii's housing challenges and views this measure as an important part of the broader, coordinated solution to support our vulnerable residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your continued commitment to meeting housing needs of Hawaii's kupuna.

SB-2866

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 12:18:31 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/10/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sara Lenzer Medeiros	Testifying for Policy Advisory Board Elderly Affairs (PABEA)	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Sara Lenzer Medeiros, and I am a board member of the Governor's Policy Advisory Board about Elderly Affairs (PABEA). I am writing on the board's behalf in strong support of Senate Bill 2866, Kupuna Rent Supplement Program. The bill continues to provide rent suppliments for Kupuna with no sunset. (SB 843 is related in some ways to the intent of the bill. HB 1488 and HB 1489 also relate to prevention of homelessness. HB2105 rent stabilization/)

There are many reasons why our Kupuna, especially those in rural communities as well as condo/apartment/room dwellers are unable to meet the rising costs of shelter. These well established issues have to do with conflicting rising costs of food, medications as well as transportation. As you know, many/most Kupuna are living on fixed incomes. Hard choices sometimes mean that they get behind on rent, mortgages, and property taxes.

Some reasons are complex. One aspect which puts Kupuna at risk is aging housing. Responsible families, owners and landlords do the right thing, by upgrading housing to assist elders with mobility challenges. Family members may move in together. They may encourage Kupuna to move in with their children. With these often come increases in rental and housing costs. Many Kupuna have family that has relocated to mainland destinations for better opportunities leaving Kupuna to live on their own.

To meet these new costs, many elders have taken in others with similar situations. Some have provided space for these others to live in cars, in tents and squatting in makeshift units in return for contributions toward housing costs. And while creative, they are struggling. Overcrowding, additional costs, can become an additional burden.

The help from this legislation (and others), is a small gift of assistance our vulnerable elders need and deserve, often to prevent having to leave the security of their homes, through no fault of their own.

Living in Kona, I am no stranger to the plight of many of our Hawai'i Island Kupuna who are at risk, close to being without shelter. They must make hard decisions. Shoulds they cut back on their medication or food to make the increased housing costs? Many have chosen the option to live in their cars or gather with others who can help with those burdens. Although there are many

non-profits and agencies who are trying to help, there are so many hands, especially on neighbor islands, asking for assistance. More than these organizations can provide. The number of those at risk and in great need exceeds the available funds and shelters for these Kupuna. The recent Point in Time survey will surely show what is so apparent on our streets, parks and ag lots (SB2162).

PABEA respectfully and strongly urges you to support this bill. Thank you for your consideration of helping those at risk, especially our Kupuna.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAI'I

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2866: RELATING TO KUPUNA HOUSING

TO: Senate Committee on Housing and Senate Committee on Health & Human Services
FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawai'i
Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2026; 1:00 PM; via Videoconference or Room 225

Chair Chang, Vice Chair Hashimoto, and Committee on Housing
Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Committee on Health and Human Services:

Catholic Charities Hawai'i **strongly supports SB 2866**, which makes the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna permanent and appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority (HPHA) for positions to support this program.

Catholic Charities Hawai'i (CCH) is a tax-exempt, community-based organization that has provided social services in Hawai'i for over 78 years, serving over 40,000 people annually across the state. Our mission is to provide services and advocate for the most vulnerable people in Hawai'i. We have a long-standing history of leadership in affordable housing, homelessness solutions, and child welfare.

CCH supports this bill to ensure that kupuna, and other low-income households, who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, or pay a high percentage of income for rent, continue to receive critical rental assistance. Making this program permanent would give kupuna and other households who have secured housing through this program the security to remain in these homes. In January, 2026, 601 households, including 300 kupuna households, received this rental subsidy. The total paid out to landlords was \$248,335 for one month. These renters would face homelessness without the ongoing continuation of the program as provided in this bill.

Hawai'i has seen a tragic surge in homeless kupuna. Catholic Charities Hawai'i is witnessing a growing number of elders experiencing homelessness for the first time—often due to losing long-term rental housing as landlords rebuild or renovate, rising rents, losing a household member's income (e.g. due to the death of a spouse or partner), or facing health challenges.

CCH's Housing Assistance Program (HAP) provides housing counseling for O'ahu residents aged 60+. Most HAP clients have very low incomes and can only afford \$300 to \$500 per month in rent, making rental assistance essential to prevent homelessness. One HAP client was a 67-year-old male living in a container on a property with no kitchen or bathroom. He was given notice to vacate. He couch surfed or stayed in his vehicle until he got accepted into a new affordable senior housing project with a rent of \$855/month for seniors with incomes below 30% of the area median income (AMI). He was **using more than 80% of his income to pay for rent**. HAP assisted him to apply for Rent Supplement which was a godsend. Now he is housed with a truly affordable rent and can save funds for future needs or even future rent increases.

We urge your support for this bill. If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813 •





February 9, 2026

Testimony in Support of S.B.2866 Relating to Kūpuna Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Housing and Health and Human Services Committees,

Aloha United Way stands in **strong support of S.B. 2866**, which makes the State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna permanent and provides funding to sustain and administer the program.

Housing costs remain the primary driver of financial instability in Hawai'i, particularly for older adults on fixed incomes. According to ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) data, 40%¹ of households struggle to afford the basic cost of living, and many kūpuna are especially vulnerable to rent increases and displacement. Kūpuna are currently the fastest² growing ALICE demographic.

The State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna has already helped to prevent hundreds of older residents from facing eviction and homelessness with modest monthly assistance. This program is a cost-effective and targeted solution that helps kūpuna remain safely housed in their communities, close to their support networks, health providers, and familiar surroundings.

Making this program permanent will provide stability for some of Hawai'i's most vulnerable residents while helping the State avoid far greater downstream costs associated with homelessness, emergency medical care, and institutionalization.

Aloha United Way respectfully urges the Committee to pass S.B. 2866.

Mahalo,

Michelle Bartell
President & CEO
Aloha United Way

¹ <https://www.auw.org/about/alice-initiative/alice-reports/>

²United For ALICE. *Trends in Financial Hardship: Hawai'i* (2025)



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**The Hawai'i State Legislature
Senate Committee on Housing
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Conference Room 225, 1:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Stanley Chang, Chair
The Honorable Joy San Buenaventura, Chair
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director
RE: Support for S.B. 2866 Relating to Kupuna Housing

Aloha Chair Chang, Chair San Buenaventura and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

AARP supports S.B. 2866 which repeals the sunset date for the state rent supplement program that specifically target qualified individuals who are sixty-two years of age or older and are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Hawaii's high cost of housing is making it unaffordable for many, but especially for those at low or fixed income. These residents are more vulnerable of becoming dependent on other family members for shelter, or face homelessness. According to Statista/AARP analysis of census data available by United States Census Bureau (USCB), close to 387 older adults (age 65+) in Hawaii are expected to be evicted in 2026 and more than 1,147 older adults (age 65+) are expected to experience homelessness in 2026 in Hawaii. It is essential to assist older adults from facing housing crisis and therefore, the proposed S.B. 2866 will help many vulnerable kūpuna from being displaced from their residence.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support **S.B. 2866**.

SB-2866

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 7:58:42 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/10/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANNETTE TASHIRO	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please be reminded that Kupuna with disabilities are also in need of a safe and accessible place to live. As we age, various disabling conditions arise and the person would need accommodations.

SB-2866

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 8:30:20 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/10/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-2866

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 2:36:26 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/10/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John A. H. Tomoso	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

RE: SB2866

I am in strong favor of the repeal of the sunset for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna. Appropriates funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna and for positions to support the program.

Mahalo and aloha,

John A.H. Tomoso+, MSW< ACW

51 Ku'ula St., Kahului, HI 96732-206, john.a.h.tomoso@gmail.com

SB-2866

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 8:27:09 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/10/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT for SB2866

Our Kupuna are facing rising costs for everything, Rental Housing, food, medical care and prescriptions.

Rental housing rent alone is rising. Some are facing incredible hefty increases in their monthly rents "affordable" "low income" senior housing.

A loaf of Bread costs \$6-\$9.00 at both Walmart or Safeway. The increases in transportation, if they have their own car, it's the gas, then the insurance and registration costs.

Even with Medicare, there are out of pocket costs that Medicare does not cover.

Please pass SB2866 for our Kupuna!

SB-2866

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 12:10:02 PM

Testimony for HOU on 2/10/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara J. Service	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kupuna need housing, period. Many Kupuna need affordable housing.

Please pass this bill.

Barbara J. Service. MSW

Child Welfare Supervisor (ret.)

Passionate Kupuna advocate

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

KENNETH FINK, MD, MGA, MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH
KA LUNA HO'OKELE



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Testimony in SUPPORT of SB2866
Relating to Kupuna Housing

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
Senator Stanley Chang, Chair
Senator Troy N. Hashimoto, Vice-Chair

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Senator Joy A. San Buenaventura, Chair
Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Vice Chair

Testimony of Caroline Cadirao
Director, Executive Office on Aging
Attached Agency to the Department of Health

Hearing: Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 1:30 P.M., Conference Room 225

1 **EOA's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging (EOA), an attached agency to the Department
2 of Health supports the intent of SB2866 and offers comments. EOA requests that this program
3 and appropriation not conflict with, reduce, or replace priorities identified in the executive
4 budget.

5 **Fiscal Implications:** This measure appropriates \$2,160,000 to the Hawai'i Public Housing
6 Authority (HPHA) for FY2026-2027 for the State Rent Supplement Program for Kupuna and
7 \$110,160 for FY2026-2027 for two full time equivalent positions within HPHA.

8 **Purpose and Justification:** This measure repeals the sunset date and makes the State Rent
9 Supplement Program for Kūpuna permanent while appropriating funds for the program and
10 necessary staff. As housing costs and inflation continue to rise, many kūpuna, who rely on Social
11 Security or other fixed retirement incomes, find it increasingly difficult to meet basic needs. To

1 afford rent, older adults are often forced to reduce spending on essential items such as food,
2 transportation, and medication. Even a small disruption in income can place them at risk of
3 eviction and homelessness.

4 The State Rent Supplement Program for Kūpuna provides critical support by reducing the
5 financial burden of Hawai‘i’s high rental costs. Consequently, stable housing can improve
6 physical and mental health, support aging in place, and reduce reliance on emergency shelters.
7 Making this program permanent will help ensure that older adults have ongoing access to safe,
8 affordable housing.

9 **Recommendation:** We support the intent of this measure and defer to HPHA for permanent
10 implementation.

11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.