

**OPPORTUNITY  
YOUTH  
ACTION HUI**

06 April 2022

House Committee on Finance

Hearing Time: 2:45 p.m.

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 3168, SD 2 HD1, Relating to Homelessness

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **support** of SB 3168 SD 2 HD1, relating to homelessness. This bill extends the ohana zones pilot program to 06/30/2028. It appropriates funds for the continuation and stabilization of the program and establishes a permanent ohana zones program within the Department of Human Services upon expiration of the pilot program.

We are in support of the continuation of the ohana zones program and believe that it is serving its intended purpose to provide critical services to the State's homeless population. The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is especially concerned about homelessness among youth, with research showing that youth aged 12–17 are at higher risk than adults of becoming homeless. According to a recent report, transition-aged youth between 18 and 24 years are one of the fastest growing homeless populations. Homeless youth often do not receive adequate services. They may not meet shelter admission policies, and, at times, there is a lack of bed space for youth. Although homeless young adults can use shelter services, services may not always be a good fit for the needs of the transitioning population. This bill is an important step among many that need to be taken to address homelessness in our community. We ask that you support it.

The Opportunity Youth Action Hui is a collaboration of organizations and individuals committed to reducing the harmful effects of a punitive incarceration system for youth, promoting equity in the justice system, and improving and increasing resources to address adolescent and young adult mental health needs. We seek to improve the continuity of programs and services for youth and young adults transitioning from minor to adult status; eliminate youth homelessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally-informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

**Please support SB 3168 SD 2.**