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1 February 2022

Senate Committees on Housing and Human Services

Hearing Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: Virtual

Re: SB 3018, Relating to Homelessness

Aloha mai e Chairs Chang and San Buenaventura, Vice-Chairs Kanuha and Ihara and members of the Committees:

We are writing in **support** of SB 3018, relating to homelessness. This requires the Hawaii housing finance and development corporation to establish the kauhale program to provide individual or shared micro housing units and services to homeless individuals and families who meet the definition of chronically homeless or are currently homeless.

We are in support of the cultural model of housing consisting of tiny homes clusters and communal areas for restrooms, cooking, and gathering. We believe in the program which is meant to foster a sense of community and ownership among their formerly homeless residents. 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 individual 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 houselessness and housing market discrimination against young adults; and promote and fund more holistic and culturally-informed approaches among public/private agencies serving youth.

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Description automatically generatedPlease support SB 3018.**