

March 15, 2023

House Committee on Housing

Hearing Time: 09:00 a.m.

Location: State Capitol

Re: SB 1040, Relating to Homelessness

Aloha e Chair Hashimoto, Vice Chair Aiu, and members of the Committee:

We are writing in **strong support** ofSB 1040, Relating to Homelessness.

This bill will require the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands to establish the Rent-With-Option-To-Purchase Pilot Program on the Leeward Coast of Oʻahu to provide rent-with-option-to-purchase individual or shared micro housing units and services to native Hawaiian beneficiaries who are homeless, or threatened with homelessness, and who are on the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands waiting list.

According to the Partners in Care 2022 Point in Time Count, 52% of the overall homeless population identified Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander (NHPI) as either their only race or part of their multiracial identity. As the ancestral inhabitants of this land, it is our duty and responsibility to make substantial efforts towards providing safe and secure housing for Native Hawaiians. This program would utilize land from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for these housing units – land that rightfully belongs to Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) in the first place. The State of Hawaiʻi has failed the Hawaiian people over the course of its history. It is high time we start remedying our harm and injustices, and we need to do so expeditiously.

Our collective, Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi (OYAH), works to support young people under the age of 25 who are disconnected from school and work, referred to as “opportunity youth.” This developmental time period is extremely consequential to the individual growth and overall life chances of our children. **We support this measure.**

Opportunity Youth Action Hawaiʻi 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 houselessness 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 1040.**