

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE PARTNERS

2021 PRIORITY BILLS

AT A GLANCE

SUPPORT: HB729, SB143/HB79, HB3/SB56, SB36/SB206, SB391, HB606, HB676, SB1127/HB973, HB1147, SB148, SB512

OPPOSE: HB1296, HB1297, HB1298, HB1299

To receive legislative updates, email CAP Chief Advocate Kristen Alice at kalice@hopeserviceshawaii.org.

HB729 SUPPORT

Will provide stopgap funding for homeless services in the event that the Department of Human Services budget is cut

Talking Points

- Funds core homeless services: housing first, rapid re-housing, family assessments centers, homeless outreach, civil legal service.
- It is essential to maintain core services especially at a time when so many households are unable to pay rent.
- The Housing First Program allows us to pursue and use Federal dollars to address housing. Without funding for Housing First, we will lose access to these funds.
- Rapid-Rehousing is a shallow subsidy that helps individuals and families who have recently fallen into homelessness, return quickly to housing by assisting with the significant costs of security deposits and first month's rent.
- The Family Assessment Centers help ensure that our homeless families with children have a safe place to shelter and additional supports necessary to help them find appropriate safe and stable housing. The data on homelessness continues to indicate that children who experience homelessness with their families are more likely to experience homelessness as youth and adults. Additionally, we know that childhood trauma -- which includes homelessness -- can have lifelong impacts on the healthy and wellbeing of those individuals.
- If we don't fund Outreach Services there won't be any staff to go out onto the streets and assist homeless individuals and families get into shelter or stable long term housing.
- Civil legal services are essential for navigating and overcoming the many legal barriers that often force individuals and families to remain homeless.

HB1296/HB1297/HB1298/HB1299 OPPOSE

Raiding State Funds (These bills together are designed to transfer the balances of special funds, which fund a variety of services, to the general fund. Please search [this State Auditor's report](#) and the [auditor's website](#) to identify programs supported by

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these funds)

Talking Points - More forthcoming

- Any cuts must be made with surgical precision, not by broadly cutting

SB143/HB79 SUPPORT

Affordable Homeownership Revolving Fund

Talking Points

- 1 in 5 households spend half or more of their income on housing, and \$38.76 per hour is the wage required to afford fair market rent for a two bedroom apartment in the state of Hawaii.
- Shortage of 23,143 of affordable and available households for extremely low-income renters in Hawaii.
- This revolving fund would provide for more funding to build more affordable housing for homeownership.
- Homeownership for low-income families is a pathway to economic growth.
- Homeownership benefits the families and communities in many ways, including: wealth building, better health care outcomes, reduced stress, improved academic and behavioral outcomes for children, and greater family engagement in civic and community activities.

HB3/SB56 SUPPORT

Progressive Revenue Omnibus (Increases: income tax for high earners, tax on capital gains, corporate income tax, conveyance taxes for the sale of properties valued at \$1,000,000 or greater.)

Talking Points

- Research confirms that, four years after the Great Recession, states where government spending was cut were still struggling to recover, while states where government spending remained the same or was increased had already bounced back and moved on. These cuts to social services have contributed to high rates of homelessness and public health crises.
- These tax fairness proposals are designed to **target profitable corporations** and wealthy individuals who can afford to pay a little more to keep Hawai'i going strong during this pandemic
- If Hawai'i's millionaires, the top 1% or 2%, were subject to higher personal income tax rates, that would raise between \$12.6–\$100.2 million in additional revenues per year.

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- Tax investments the same way regular income is taxed. Hawai'i is one of only nine states that allows profits from the sale of stocks, bonds, investment real estate, and other "capital gains" to be taxed at a lower rate than ordinary income. Long-term capital gains make up 10% of total taxable income in the state. If those capital gains were taxed at regular individual income tax rates, it would yield about \$80.2 million in new revenue annually.
- [More on how much \\$ would be generated](#)

SB36/SB206 SUPPORT

Prohibits Source of Income Discrimination on rental housing

Talking Points

- The Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program is one of the federal government's major programs for assisting very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market, including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments.
- In recent years, non-profit housing navigators who help find housing for our low income families experiencing homelessness, have found an increasing number of landlords who advertise "no Section 8" or who refuse to accept section 8 vouchers. The result is fewer housing options and more clients sleeping on couches and in cars.
- Community Alliance Partners' case managers provide supportive services when needed so that their clients seeking housing are successful and respectful tenants. These clients are particularly low risks for the landlords.
- Adding a non-discrimination requirement for private landlords does not add additional paperwork for landlords.
- Add examples from your own experiences or those of your clients if you have them.

SB391 SUPPORT

Expungement for homelessness related crimes.

- This bill will help remove barriers obtaining housing and employment
- This bill will remove one of the barriers that forces individuals and families to remain homeless for longer periods of time.
- This bill will help reduce the current tendency to criminalize poverty and homelessness.

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- Homelessness/Houselessness should not be a crime especially in a State with a significant shortage of truly affordable housing.
- AMENDMENT: Please support the ACLU's suggestion that the measure be amended to provide for automatic expungement of records relating to a person's houseless status.

HB606 SUPPORT

Dwelling Unit Revolving Fund (Authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds with the funds to be deposited into the dwelling unit revolving fund and the rental housing revolving fund)

- The Rental Housing Revolving Fund was established to provide- loans to fill financing gaps to enable the development, preservation, or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing projects, including projects consisting of housing units for persons and families at or below one hundred per cent, eighty per cent, and thirty per cent of the median family income.
- This bill is to appropriate funds (\$200,000,000) for the purpose the fund was established.
- A lack of affordable housing is the single greatest cause of homelessness in Hawaii
- Before the pandemic, half our state was ALICE - Asset Limited, Income Constrained Employed--meaning that despite working, they still couldn't afford the cost of living.
- COVID has amplified that, and we are seeing greater numbers of families doubled up. 15 people living in a 2 bedroom apartment is not extraordinary.
- There is an increase in wealthy mainland investors and white collar workers investing in property here, and our local people, who are paid the lowest relative wages in the nation, will continue to be outbid.

HB676 SUPPORT

Increases the Minimum Wage

- AMENDMENT: Please support an amendment to incrementally increase the minimum wage to \$17 an hour by 2026
- Our economy is powered through consumer spending. Businesses in Hawai'i need customers in order to survive. The pandemic-recession has made it extremely difficult for Hawai'i's low-wage families (and many middle-wage ones too) to make ends meet in an already high-cost state through reduced employment and wages, as well as through

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unexpected healthcare and family care costs. When those families don't have enough to cover their basic needs, they stop spending their earnings at Hawai'i businesses. Customers are workers, and workers are customers.

- The roughly 11 percent increase per year that we are asking for in \$17 by 2026 will be easier for businesses to transition to than one 19 percent increase (\$12 by 2022) while doing a better job of giving working families the purchasing power they need to participate in the economy.
- Data shows us that raising the minimum wage has helped small businesses in Hawai'i. The number of small businesses and small business employees increased during the last minimum wage hike between 2014 and 2018 (which raised the wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10, or about 10 percent per year). Businesses have more demand for their goods and services as wages rise across the state, helping them pay their employees more as well.
- As low-wage labor is only a small portion of a business's costs, an increase in their prices of just 2 percent can completely compensate for a \$1 per year raise in the hourly minimum wage. People are happy to pay slightly more for goods if it means that employees are paid a fair wage.

SB1127/HB973 SUPPORT

Makes emergency funding appropriation to General Assistance Program

Talking Points

- More people are reliant on assistance due to COVID-19, and current funding isn't enough to maintain \$388/monthly payments for everyone. Cutting or reducing this barely liveable amount would be devastating for HI's most vulnerable. We must ensure there is funding to keep people from losing everything.
- SB1127 would provide an emergency appropriation for the General Assistance program for this current fiscal year to prevent any reduction in benefits, enabling benefits to continue at their current levels. As many homeless individuals rely on GA to meet basic needs, a reduction would be detrimental to this population.

HB1147 SUPPORT

Appropriates funds for capital improvement projects

Talking Points

- With State budgets ravaged by COVID, Investing in affordable housing is more important than ever.
- Housing is healthcare; Just emergency care for unsheltered homeless costs over one-hundred million dollars a year. Housing projects also create hundreds of jobs

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during construction and hundreds of permanent jobs after completion, helping to strengthen our fragile economy.

- Evictions will surely surge because of COVID, making the homeless crisis much worse. Even before COVID, the high cost of housing has driven many residents into homelessness and pushes young people to move out of the state. Because of Hawaii's lack of affordable rental housing, 60% of our families pay more than one-third of their income on rent, which means that unexpected life events, such as losing a job, caring for a sick family member or recovering from a car accident, will put them into financial jeopardy. To house Hawaii's lower income families – those making \$61,000 or less – 20,000 housing units are needed by the year 2025.
- Kūpuna are the most vulnerable. Besides being the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic, elders face significant health trauma from homelessness. Studies predict a 300% increase in elderly homelessness over the next 10 years. Moreover, the overall elderly population is growing extremely fast. From 2010 to 2018, Hawai'i's seniors grew by 33%, sixty-six times higher than the general population.

SB148 SUPPORT

Requires proof of landlord tax payment to begin eviction proceedings

Talking Points

- Landlords who use the taxpayer-funded court system to evict tenants should be required to prove they are complying with their tax-related obligations.
- This bill would encourage tax code compliance and discourage frivolous and illegal eviction efforts by landlords who don't respect their tenants' rights.

SB512 SUPPORT

Removes DaBux \$10 per visit per day cap on locally grown food and some healthy proteins

Talking Points

- Check out [this great article about DA BUX in Civil Beat](#) which highlights the following benefits of the program: "Even before the pandemic opened so much in the islands, DA BUX was succeeding. Now more than ever, it is changing lives for the better in four very tangible and important ways:
- It's putting more food on the tables of local families in need.
- Provides incentives that encourage people to buy locally grown and produced food
- It's strengthening the local economy by keeping more dollars in the Islands.

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- It's improving local health by providing incentives to eat fresher, unprocessed foods.
- DA BUX is a program that works – and that should be expanded.

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Here are some tips for writing your own testimony from Partners in Care: Choose one or two that would be most relevant to you; only needs to be a few sentences.

- *Tell your story: how are you or your local community impacted by homelessness and the lack of affordable rental housing? Give a short story or example.*
- *Why do you care about this bill and the people that the bill would help: the elderly? the mentally ill? families with children? people on the streets for many years?*
- *How do you feel the bill would help people in this year of the pandemic?*
- *Choose one or two data points from above on this topic. Use them to support your request to the legislators to support the bill.*

HOW TO SUBMIT TESTIMONY FOR A HEARING, ATTEND THE HEARING VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE & REGISTER WITH THE LEGISLATURE:

1. Please REGISTER at www.capitol.hawaii.gov
2. Once you are registered, to Submit Testimony, sign in and:
 1. Click on **“Testimony”** icon; type in bill number (no spaces, i.e. “HB1011” or “SB1234”)
 2. Fill out the form—if no time to write testimony, you can just click on **“Support”** and **“Submit”**.
 3. Click **“Submit”**.
 4. If you want to write testimony in a separate word document: You can upload a file you've saved on your computer that includes your testimony. Use the **“Choose File”** or **“Browse”** button. This testimony can then be reused for multiple hearings (change as needed).
3. Click **“Submit.”** Your testimony confirmation will appear in the left-hand column, highlighted in **green**, showing it was successfully processed and submitted.

YOU CAN ALSO APPEAR VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA LINKS ON THE LEGISLATURE’S WEBSITE. *If you wish to testify via videoconference during the hearing, please sign in to your account on the Legislature’s website, then click on the “Testimony” icon on the home page. Detailed step-by-step instructions are available on the testimony submittal page. They are also posted on the Legislature’s website [here](#).*