

Testimony of the  
County of Hawai'i  
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Before a joint hearing of the  
**Senate Ways and Means Committee**  
and  
**House Finance Committee**  
January 23, 2017

Unfortunately the County of Hawai'i, by percentage, has the highest number of people in poverty and homeless. As families who are homeless and have children that qualify for free meals and transportation close due poverty. For example, district of Ka'u, over 92% of all the schools are of the federal poverty line. District of Puna – the most populated district on the island of Hawai'i; the fastest growing district in the State of Hawai'i – all public school students receive free meals. All schools are over the 75% level of students that meet the federal level of poverty.

Bear in mind, and adding to the difficulty of the people of those districts:

- Majority of the people in the Ka'u district are without running water.
- Over 20,000 of the people in the Puna District are without County water.
- Both districts are located away from job sites which add to the problems and costs of employment. With these problems it is easy to understand that our highest priority is to aid in ways

County government of Hawai'i can lessen the cost and burden to the people.

Priorities:

1. No increase of taxes.
2. Provide government services when possible. Free bus rides - regardless of distance. Free rides to all was established in 2000, but was changed to \$2.00 in 2012.
3. Water stations in all districts that provide free water in a safe, clean and accessible areas.

Priority Issues:

- Any increase in the TAT will help in the balancing of a highly scrutinized budget.
- A reasonable implementation of the increase of the ERS contribution by the County.
- Review of the cuts imposed spread over 5-8 years on the hospital system (HHSC) for Hawai'i Island to prevent further cuts to the care of Hawai'i's people.