



Hawaii
Children's Action Network
Building a unified voice for Hawaii's children

Board of Directors

Officers

David Randall
President

David Okumura
Vice President

Ben Ancheta
Vice President

Deborah Zysman
*Vice President and
Executive Director*

Tracy Nakashima
Treasurer

Dean Wong
Secretary

Mark M. Murakami
Past President

Directors

Cathy Ogawa
Chris Jackson
Darin Leong
Jennifer Thompson
Keith Vieira
Kimi Takazawa
Susan Smith
Dr. Travis Hong
Tyler Dos Santos-Tam
Wendy Correa

Address

850 Richards Street
Suite 201
Honolulu, HI
96813

P: (808) 531-5502

March 29, 2016

To: Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair
Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

From: Deborah Zysman, Executive Director
Hawaii Children's Action Network

Re: **HB2244, HD1 SD1 – Relating to Housing – Support**
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 211 – March 29, 2016, 9:35 AM

On behalf of Hawaii Children's Action Network (HCAN), formerly Good Beginnings Alliance, we are writing in support of HB2244, HD1, SD1 Relating to Housing.

HCAN is committed to improving lives and being a strong voice advocating for Hawai'i's children. Last fall, HCAN convened input in person and online from more than 50 organizations and individuals that came forward to support or express interest for a number of issues affecting children and families in our state that resulted in the compilation of 2016 Hawai'i Children's Policy Agenda, which can be accessed at <http://www.hawaii-can.org/2016policyagenda>.

HCAN supports this bill, which would appropriate funds to provide:

- \$75 million for the repair and maintenance of the states existing public housing units;
- \$3 million to expand the State's Housing First Program;
- \$ 2 million for temporary rental (Rapid Rehousing) subsidies for working families.

Funding programs like these help to address the chronic housing shortage and bridge the economic gap for families to afford safe and secure housing, especially those with young children. Without these subsidies, we could see our state continue to lead the nation in growing rates for homelessness and unsafe and unstable housing option.

Homeless Children: Hawai'i has the highest homeless rate in the nation. It's estimated that one-third of the homeless in Hawai'i are children.

Unstable Housing: Many of our families may not be living on the street or the beach, yet they don't have permanent housing -- they stay with friends and family -- moving frequently.

High cost of housing for families: 60 percent of households with young children in Hawai'i pay more than 30% of their income for housing.

According to a 2012 report published by Child Trends, children who experience a high degree of instability and turbulence in their lives are more likely to suffer higher levels of emotional and behavioral problems. Children who are homeless may suffer from hunger, poor physical and emotional health, and missed educational opportunities. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness, children who are homeless are twice as likely to go hungry as are children who are not homeless. Homeless children are more likely than other children to have moderate to severe acute and chronic health problems, and less access to medical and dental care. Symptoms of asthma, hyperactivity/inattention, and behavior problem are more prevalent among this group. Homeless children have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, such as anxiety, depression, sleep problems, withdrawal and aggression. Children without stable homes are more than twice as likely as others to repeat a school grade, be expelled or suspended, or drop out of high school. A quarter or more of homeless children have witnessed violence.

Hawai'i needs a comprehensive affordable housing solution that helps families at every stage to secure stable housing solutions to help families and keiki in our state build a pathway toward greater economic stability and a healthier thriving community.

For these reasons, HCAN respectfully requests that the committee vote to pass this bill.