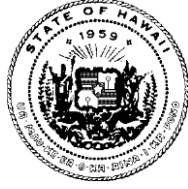


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February 11, 2019

TO: The Honorable Senator Russell E. Ruderman, Chair
Senate Committee on Human Services

The Honorable Senator Laura H. Thielen, Chair
Senate Committee on Government Operations

FROM: Pankaj Bhanot, Director

SUBJECT: **SB 575 – RELATING TO THE STATE COORDINATOR ON HOMELESSNESS**

Hearing: Monday, February 11, 2019, 2:50 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: The Department of Human Services (DHS) supports the intent of the bill, makes comments, and proposes amendments. The Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness is a necessary and vital position to coordinate the statewide approach to reducing the incidence and impact of homelessness on individuals, families, and residents of Hawaii.

The current proposal requires clarification as to the appointing entity; to maintain the current structure, in administrative bill SB1222 DHS has proposed the Governor remain the appointing entity, and suggests the following:

Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding to part XVIII a new section to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"§346- Governor's coordinator on homelessness. The governor shall appoint the governor's coordinator on homelessness for the proper

administration and enforcement of this chapter without regard to chapter 76."

Currently, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness has temporary staff positions and an operational budget that is included in the Director of Human Services Program ID. DHS suggests that the Governor's Coordinator on Homeless be provided its own Program ID and the staff positions be made permanent to maintain some kind of programmatic continuity upon executive transitions.

In terms of supervision, currently, the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness works directly with the Governor's office on larger policy goals and coordinates with the DHS Director who provides supervisory, personnel and fiscal oversight, and with the DHS Homeless Programs Office on programmatic administrative and operational issues.

With all due respect to the Office of the Lt. Governor, DHS prefers that the current appointment and supervision structure be maintained and clarified in statute, that proposed amendments to part XVIII, Chapter 346, HRS, be enacted to support continuity, and reduce potential conflicts if the Governor directs or requests the Department to do one thing and the Lt. Governor directs the homeless coordinator to do something else.

Additionally, if one considers that since 2012, there have been four individuals (Schatz, Tsutui, Chin, and now Green) who have held the Office of Lt. Governor, supervisory continuity during transitions may be a concern.

Any appropriation for the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness should be made part of the DHS base budget; it is difficult to lead the state's coordinated effort on year to year funding.

Also, currently, while the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness is administratively attached to DHS, the office is located within the Governor's office at the capitol to facilitate easier access to the Governor's Office and because DHS lacks available office space. If the Governor continues to be the appointing entity, it would be logical that the office be physically located as part of the Governor's office.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the measure is to establish the position of state coordinator on homelessness and requires the state coordinator on homelessness to report directly to the lieutenant governor. Makes an appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

SB-575

Submitted on: 2/7/2019 9:54:02 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
David Deges	Testifying for Hawaii Island HIV/AIDS Foundation	Support	Yes

Comments:

SB-575

Submitted on: 2/10/2019 2:43:26 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for O`ahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai`i	Support	No

Comments:

SB-575

Submitted on: 2/5/2019 10:57:16 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Louise Storm	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

My feeling is that unless this endeavor is willing to act on input from homeless people and from studies on what is actually happening in the housing market from a sociological standpoint, this will just add another layer of money-wasting bureaucratic red tape, produce a ton of jargon-filled reports, and little in the way of positive results. The problem is way more complex than saying, "Why don't they (the homeless) just get jobs and avoid unnecessary expenses?"

For instance, the push to create more affordable housing units is also an opportunity for more outside people to move to Hawaii and put themselves in competition with locals needing reasonably priced living units. The marketing of Hawaii as a tourist destination is probably fueling the luxury condominium complexes and monster houses construction boom, which seems to find the wealthy part time resident and the transient accommodation aspects more lucrative than in taking in low and moderate income local renters who are at risk for becoming homeless.

Somehow, these incentives need to be changed, but having a homelessness czar who reports to the Lt. Governor is not the answer unless he is willing to do some really creative thinking outside the box and be forceful about implementing these changes.

SB-575

Submitted on: 2/9/2019 8:58:54 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/11/2019 2:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	No

Comments: