

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

981

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 27 2009

RE: H.B. No. 1098
H.D. 2
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fifth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2009
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Human Services, to which was referred H.B. No. 1098, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO GENERAL ASSISTANCE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Apply assistance allowance calculations based on standard of need to General Assistance payments for households without minor dependents;
- (2) Place a twenty-four-month limit on General Assistance to persons between eighteen and sixty-five years of age with a disability;
- (3) Provide that any month in which a person receives assistance pending an eligibility determination for the federal Supplemental Security Income Program or successor program shall not be counted toward the twenty-four-month limit;
- (4) Require the Department of Human Services to refer General Assistance recipients to the Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled program after twelve months or upon the recipient turning sixty-five years old; and



- (5) Convert the funding mechanism for General Assistance from a block grant to an entitlement.

Testimony in support of this measure was provided by the National Association of Social Workers - Hawaii Chapter, Waianae Community Outreach, and four individuals. Testimony in opposition to this measure was provided by the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii. The Department of Human Services and Legal Aid Society of Hawaii provided comments on this measure. Written testimony presented to the Committee may be reviewed on the Legislature's website.

Your Committee finds that the caseload for the General Assistance program has been growing due to an increase in the number of individuals receiving assistance, those currently in the program receiving assistance for longer periods of time, and an increase in monthly assistance payments. Your Committee further finds that the increased financial burden on the General Assistance program and the current funding of General Assistance as a block grant have led to borrowing from Aid to the Aged, Blind, and Disabled program monies to fund General Assistance payments and reduced monthly General Assistance payments from \$469 to \$235.

Your Committee finds that the General Assistance program is a critical safety net that should provide dependable financial assistance to certain disabled persons who lack other means of financial support. Your Committee believes that converting the General Assistance program to an entitlement program would ensure a steady stream of support to those who need temporary assistance.

Your Committee has amended this measure by making technical, nonsubstantive changes for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Human Services that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1098, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1098, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.




Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Human Services,

Suzanne Chun Oakland
SUZANNE CHUN OAKLAND, Chair



The Senate
 Twenty-Fifth Legislature
 State of Hawaii

Record of Votes
Committee on Human Services
HMS

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
HB1098 HD2	HMS, WAM	3/20/09		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
CHUN OAKLAND, Suzanne (C)	✓			
IHARA, Jr., Les (VC)	✓			
GREEN, M.D., Josh	✓			
HEMMINGS, Fred				✓
TOTAL	3	0	0	1
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
				
Distribution:				
Original	Yellow	Pink	Goldenrod	
File with Committee Report	Clerk's Office	Drafting Agency	Committee File Copy	

*Only one measure per Record of Votes