WHEREAS, addressing the needs of those living without permanent housing has been an extremely difficult situation to resolve; and

WHEREAS, despite the efforts of many to tackle the issue of homelessness, the problem continues to increase, and communities concerned about the health and safety of their residents have demanded that homeless persons be removed from areas in their communities where they congregate; and

WHEREAS, homeless persons have been periodically removed from these areas to allow the public access to and use of these public areas and to reduce the perceived threat of criminal activity; and

WHEREAS, removal from one location does not address the underlying reasons for homelessness, whether societal or personal, and may worsen the plight of the homeless by causing the loss or destruction of essential personal property; and

WHEREAS, this body is striving to address long-term solutions to homelessness, including repairing or building hundreds of public housing units, providing housing subsidies and services, employment and job training programs, ways of combating substance abuse, and food distribution programs; and

WHEREAS, while long-term solutions are vital, they do not respond to the immediate problems faced by homeless persons who are constantly under the threat of removal from their current location; and

URGING THE HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH HOMELESS SAFE ZONES.
WHEREAS, one concept that would offer an immediate solution is the establishment of homeless safe zones that would provide a designated area for the homeless to stay at night in a reasonably safe and supervised setting; and

WHEREAS, there are private organizations that are ready and willing to provide this type of service to the homeless - some that are even willing to provide this service on their own property; and

WHEREAS, under section 356D-122, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), it is the responsibility of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority (HPHA) to:

(1) Administer and operate homeless facilities and any other program for the homeless authorized by part VII of Chapter 356D, HRS, relating to homeless assistance;

(2) Establish programs for the homeless; and

(3) Take any other actions necessary to effectuate the purposes of part VII of Chapter 356D, HRS, relating to homeless assistance;

and

WHEREAS, HPHA is authorized under section 356D-125, HRS, to contract with provider agencies to administer homeless facilities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, that HPHA is urged to contract with provider agencies to establish homeless safe zones; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that homeless safe zones established by the provider agency should, at a minimum, provide basic sanitary facilities and a place for the homeless to sleep, but may or may not offer bedding or the protection of a security guard; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that provider agencies may either provide the services on their own property, use grant or other funds to rent the property, or lease or otherwise contract with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to use available public lands; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that DLNR and other state agencies provide assistance to HPHA and any provider agencies contracting with HPHA, pursuant to section 356D-124, HRS, in identifying, contracting, and conveying land and improvements available for use by provider agencies as homeless safe zones; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City and County of Honolulu is requested also to provide assistance to HPHA and any provider agencies contracting with HPHA by donating land for use as homeless safe zones; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the Hawaii Public Housing Authority, Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources, and Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu.