WHEREAS, homelessness continues to be a persistent issue in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the 2017 Hawaii Statewide Homeless Point-in-Time count revealed that there are over seven thousand people in the State who are homeless; and

WHEREAS, nearly five thousand homeless individuals live on the island of Oahu; and

WHEREAS, over 1,150 individuals experiencing homelessness on Oahu meet the definition of chronically homeless; and

WHEREAS, over four hundred forty veterans experience homelessness on Oahu; and

WHEREAS, the Ewa region of Oahu, which includes Waipahu, experienced a fourteen percent increase in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness from 2016 to 2017; and

WHEREAS, Waipahu residents have raised concerns about a number of homeless encampments, including an encampment that included children beneath the Honowai Street Bridge near the H-1 Freeway; and

WHEREAS, there is a known homeless encampment near Hans L'Orange Park, a Waipahu neighborhood baseball park; and
WHEREAS, the staff at Hawaii's Plantation Village, an area in Waipahu that showcases twenty replicas of plantation-era buildings, filed more than fifty complaints of homeless individuals trespassing on the property, using water spigots and electrical outlets, and vandalizing village grounds; and

WHEREAS, the closure of the Waipahu Lighthouse Outreach Center, which served as a homeless shelter for ten years, in December 2016 due to the organization's inability to meet new Department of Human Services regulations is an example of the difficulty in maintaining adequate bed space for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Waipahu; and

WHEREAS, the high cost of rent for existing housing, high cost of construction of new housing, and complex state and county regulations serve as barriers to placing individuals and families experiencing homelessness in affordable, long-term housing in Waipahu; and

WHEREAS, the barriers that prevent placement of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in housing also slow the construction of new housing that would alleviate the homelessness problem; and

WHEREAS, one of the most effective responses to homelessness is one that combines access to shelter and access to available and appropriate social and medical services; and

WHEREAS, there are very few homeless shelters in or near Waipahu, and even fewer options that provide individuals and families experiencing homelessness with both shelter and services; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, that the Department of Human Services and the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness are requested to consider entering into additional contracts with provider agencies to open additional temporary homeless shelters in Waipahu; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Human Services and the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness are requested to submit reports to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each of the regular sessions of 2019 and 2020 regarding the progress of any new contracts for temporary homeless shelters in Waipahu; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Human Services and the Governor's Coordinator on Homelessness.

OFFERED BY:

MAR 01 2018