

EDB Committee

From: Kristopher Galon <hoopsg@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 4:42 PM
To: EDB Committee; Kelly King; Keani N. Rawlins
Subject: Testimony for CARES money
Attachments: Testimonial letter to CARES to County Committee 9-10-20 Kris Galon.docx

Please see attached.
Mahalo,
Kristopher Galon

Sent from my iPhone

Kristopher Galon
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September 10, 2020

Position: Use Federal Covid-19 Relief Funds to support Maui County families

Dear Committee Chair Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez, Vice-Chair Kelly Takaya King, and Committee Members:

My name is Kristopher Galon and I am a registered voter who lives in Wailuku, HI 96793. I am writing to you as a private citizen and my work as a laid off General Manager of a restaurant informs my testimony. In my work, community connections and relationship with current tenant for rental property we own, I have seen first-hand the devastating effects of this pandemic in Maui County.

As my restaurant closed at the end of July, I was forced and currently rely upon Unemployment Insurance to provide for my family. As the extra federal monies ended on July 31st that would serve to supplement the income my family has come to rely upon, my income brought home is now a third of what I was making. With my skill set, as I search for jobs in restaurants that continue to shut down or attempt to convince employment opportunities that my skill set translates, I remain reliant on Unemployment Assistance. A year or so ago, my wife and I looked ahead to purchase another property in hopes to bring in added income from rent we could collect. Due to that investment even after we brought rent down during COVID19, we are staying afloat, though be clear with **much** debt and no back up should any unexpected income cuts come to my wife. We are only staying afloat and not in a dire financial situation because of CARES Act money that came through for our tenants. With our support, our tenants followed through to connect with CARES money made available to them. Without the assistance they received through MEO H.E.L.P. and Family Life Center for rental and utilities assistance in past 6 months, we would not have been able to pay either mortgage. This would mean that today we would be in a much worse financial situation. Continuing CARES funding for housing rental or mortgage assistance and utilities seems paramount at this juncture. In addition, with the food shortage we knew our tenants were experiencing, we were able help get them food from the multiple food distributions we sought out through partnerships at Hui Mālama, Lili`uokalani Trust and Maui Food Bank. For now, my being home and on Unemployment has allowed us peace of mind for distance learning for all our keiki. When I do secure employment, we are uncertain how we will manage our keiki's school needs which will be another challenge to work through though we'll be grateful for gained job security. For our children being ages 4, 6 and 14 (with ADHD) zoom distanced education fails to meet each of their needs without a lot parental support. Therefore, resources that can support parents during this time would be very relevant.

I know that Hawai'i must spend about \$320 million in federal funds by December 30, 2020. With thoughtful intention the CARES Act monies has potential to fill the voids highlighted in my personal accounts of the effects of COVID19 as a resident of Maui County. Your committee has been entrusted to hear the voices of us, parents and families, experiencing the hardships that this pandemic has caused. Please wield your power wisely and consider the story I've presented that is likely a common account amongst your constituents at this time.

I want Maui County to request and use some of that money to support families. Some of the most pressing needs I see are:

- A lack of affordable, accessible childcare for parents who are doing their best to contribute to the work force
- Stable, affordable housing without facing a big bill of past rent or past mortgage payments due when the emergency protections and housing assistance funds end
- Cash in families' pockets so they can pay for their families' basic needs
- Food shortages due to lack of local sustainable farm to table support
- Nonprofits serving families are facing cuts in their state contracts and are being asked to serve more families in new ways with fewer resources—this is unsustainable—nonprofits need financial help

In addition to requesting your help in spending the federal money on Maui, please make the following information public on the county website:

- How much federal and state money has been allocated for Maui County because of the pandemic
- How much of that has been spent and what it has been spent on
- What the plans are for any remaining amounts
- Who is informing the County's decisions about these funds, and the best ways for families to get involved in the process.

Please continue to hold public meetings on this topic and make all documents related to these issues accessible to the public.

Thank you for your service to the County and your attention to my testimony.

Sincerely,

Kristopher Galon