

Affordable Housing Committee (2021) on 2022-02-25 9:00 AM

Meeting Time: 02-25-22 09:00

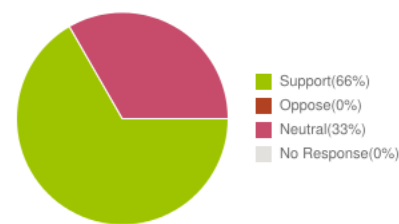
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Affordable Housing Committee (2021) on 2022-02-25 9:00 AM	02-25-22 09:00	5	3	2	0	1

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Affordable Housing Committee (2021) on 2022-02-25 9:00 AM

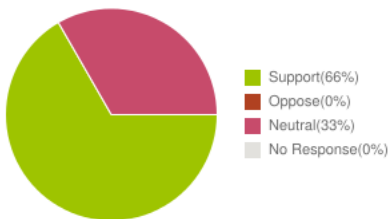
02-25-22 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
A G E N D A	1	1	0	0
AH-14(7) Direct Referral COMPREHENSIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN: EXPANDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING (AH-14(7))	1	1	0	0
AH-19 CC 21-110 HOMELESS PROGRAMS AND RELATED MATTERS (AH-19)	1	0	0	1

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

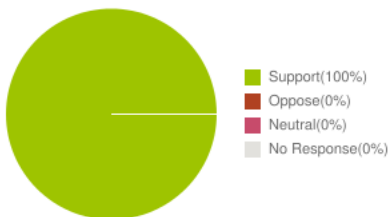
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Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for A G E N D A

Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:15am 02-23-22

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII

STATE CAPITOL

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 25, 2022

Affordable Housing Committee

Councilmember Gabe Johnson, Chair

Councilmember Mike Molina, Vice Chair
Councilmember Tasha Kama
Councilmember Kelly Takaya King
Councilmember Alice L. Lee
Councilmember Tamara Paltin
Councilmember Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez
Councilmember Shane Sinenci
Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura

Re: Supporting Agenda Items AH-14(7) & AH-4(4)

Aloha Chair Johnson, Vice Chair Molina, & Honorable Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for this opportunity to provide supportive comments for Agenda Items AH-14(7) & AH-4(4). I'm sure I don't have to explain to you that the County of Maui is experiencing a severe housing crisis. Decisionmakers must come up with creative solutions to provide housing for our working families, kupuna, and struggling ALICE households.

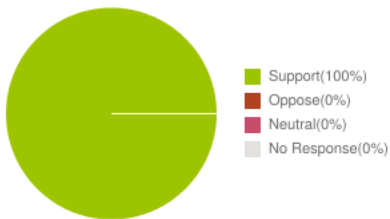
The proposals being discussed in these agenda items would simultaneously benefit our environment by facilitating critical infrastructure upgrades (especially cesspool conversion) as well as supporting our local families by requiring that those upgrades can only be done if those units go toward affordable & workforce housing.

Mahalo,

Representative Tina Wildberger
House District 11 - South Maui
K_hei _ Wailea _ M_kena

Agenda Item: eComments for AH-14(7) Direct Referral COMPREHENSIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN: EXPANDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUNDING (AH-14(7))

Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:15am 02-23-22

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

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Affordable Housing Committee
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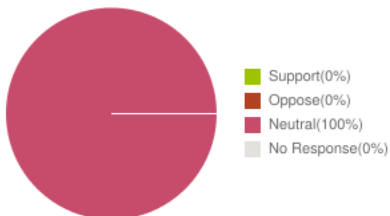
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Representative Tina Wildberger
House District 11 - South Maui
K_hei _ Wailea _ M_kena

Agenda Item: eComments for AH-19 CC 21-110 HOMELESS PROGRAMS AND RELATED MATTERS (AH-19)

Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 8:55am 02-25-22

My name is Keisa Liu and I would like to provide written testimony for agenda item AH-19

Its easy for me to recognize the humanity in victims of poor practices. It is difficult for me to recognize the humanity in those perpetuating a system that will never be able to recognize a person as the complex and unique being that it is. But I believe that might be my work.

I am on the outside of the system looking in. I do not need to use the housing programs offered by HHC nor do I need to use the homelessness programs. I do not get paid to work for HHC or any of it's agencies and am therefore not subject to their rules or funding constraints. It gives me the freedom to just watch, and listen, and learn, and ask questions. No strings attached. No personal vendetta. No agenda.

I learned a few things I would like to share.

Everyone in HHC and in all the organizations and all the private citizens we rely on to support HHCs housing and houselessness goals are social workers. We call social workers saints and heroes as if the praise alone is enough for them to fill their cup and feel supported. Because social work is hard all on its own. But unsupported social work is torture. Unsupported social work leads to burnout. Unsupported social work leads to a revolving door of houselessness. Unsupported social work leads to the belief and regurgitation of harmful narratives and defiant defense and relevance of mediocre practices.

What I am saying is if I want to see the outcomes I want to see I need to, not only hold social workers like HHC, FLC, KHAKO accountable for their actions, but also offer solutions that support them.

So here are some solutions that are going to hold them accountable for current practices and help them in their mission to support and enhance the social well-being of the citizens of Maui County.

Stop perpetuating the narrative that our houseless residents choose to stay houseless

The English proverb, “you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make them drink” is often used to illustrate this narrative. The meaning of this proverb is you can give someone an advantage or an opportunity to do something but you can’t make them do it if they do not want to. The reason why this narrative is harmful is that it oversimplifies the situation our houseless residents face. It also creates unrealistic expectations for our social workers to meet. This narrative allows the general public to assume we have the resources and systems in place to efficiently, effectively, and compassionately carry out the mission of HHC. But any surface inspection would immediately reveal that is simply not the case which leads to much of the public outcry we tend to see. Which seem to lead to defense tactics of the organizations and moves us further away from attaining the original mission. So solution number one is to simply stop using this narrative to describe why we have houseless who haven’t taken the services.

Create mobile drop-in units and drop-in center

This solution is to address the third administrative goal of HHC by fostering stronger collaboration and destruction of silos between social workers, organizations, and agencies tasked with addressing homelessness in Maui County. Long-term, we do need a centralized drop-in center where people can go. But until then, we should invest energy in mobile drop-in units. I have been attending the MMEU Mondays in Paia for several weeks. What I have witnessed is several agencies on the ground supporting each other as they support our community. No agency on Maui has enough resources to tackle houselessness alone. But watching them work together and create bonds in service made me realize having social workers support each other from different fields is essential in creating a program that can end houselessness. It recognizes the need for a diversity of services that is needed. I would love to see an expansion of mobile drop-in units for our County.

Upgrade in technology, especially for outreach and agency collaboration

Technologically speaking, we are not able to keep up with our housing and homelessness needs. It is in our best interest to begin looking for funding to increase our mobile technology for our case workers and outreach workers. Mobile printer, hotspots, tablets, and laptops with greatly increase the efficacy and efficiency of program management and reduce the workload of our outreach workers. We could also invest in utilizing a database that every agency participates in to input and receive valuable data. Allowing social workers to be more nimble while still be connected to the agency would also reduce the stress on our houseless residents who may have trouble finding transportation and adhering to a schedule. I want to remind everyone that resources are so limited for our houseless that they often don’t have consistency in transportation or time-tracking tools. Additionally, data would show an increase in participation of our programs with less touch-points required and help increase our funding.

Rework the Compassionate Relocation strategy

If the State and County is going to continue to remove people from public property, then the County needs to create real policies and procedures that reflect the definition of “compassionate relocation”. What we saw at Amala was a clear indicator of how the County’s flawed approach tramples on basic civil rights of our houseless residents. Now the ACLU’s eyes are on us. I see legislation coming through from Chair Johnson’s office and the additional language added about what to do with personal property after a compassionate relocation is necessary to safeguard the County against future lawsuits. A smart leader would recognize the warning and do what’s right.

Invest in managed encampments

We know there are not enough beds or the right kind of beds to service our houseless residents. But continuing to move them from public spaces without a destination moves us further away from the mission of eradicating houselessness for that person. Use the the Experimental and Demonstrative Housing Projects Fund to obtain land and a contract with a non-profit willing to manage an encampment. Having a managed encampment can also be a part of the compassionate relocation strategy.

The last thing I would mention is the need for a flowchart and realistic timelines of what it takes to get someone housed after they have reached the status of houselessness. Right now, we operate in 90-day programs to get people housed. The systems our social workers and the people they serve operate in set unrealistic expectations of everyone involved.

There is honestly so much more to say when it comes to our broken processes and the harm it causes our Maui County community as a whole but I have run out of time for this testimony. What else do I have to say to get us to change? What else do I have to do to make sure HHC actually fulfills their mission to support and enhance the social well-being of the citizens of Maui County?

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Keisa Liu