

EDB Committee

From: Katie Folio <calikate@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 10, 2020 1:27 PM
To: EDB Committee
Cc: Kelly King; Keani N. Rawlins; Yukilei Sugimura
Subject: Testimony: Legislation and discussion on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and related issues (EDB-85)
Attachments: Folio tesimony for CARES act funding.docx

Please find my testimony, submitted as a private citizen, attached for your consideration in relation to legislation and discussion on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and related issues in the upcoming EDB meeting.

Mahalo nui loa for thinking about the needs of Maui County families and public health in relation to CARES act spending!

Aloha,

Katie

Katie Folio
26 Kai Nana Pl, Kula
Calikate@gmail.com

September 10, 2020

Maui County Economic Development and Budget Committee

Testimony submitted via email to: edb.committee@mauicounty.us

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 Katie Folio and I am a registered voter who lives in Kula, Hawaii 96790. I am writing to you as a private citizen and my work in public health with a statewide nonprofit organization informs my testimony. In my own community and my work, I have seen first-hand the devastating effects of this pandemic in Maui County.

For example, I have seen families struggle with decisions about child care and school in order to continue to work. Many families do not have the option to work from home or learn from home. Many families are struggling to figure out how to pay their next rent check. Many don't know where their next meal will come from. These stressors and uncertainties often lead to mental health challenges, increased substance abuse, and overall decline in health and wellness.

Families across our state and county have had valid reservations about our public education systems and the lack of safeguards for our teachers, keiki, and kupua. I have observed a resistance to thinking outside the box when it comes to our economy and our way of doing things. For example, moving businesses, schools, and other activities outdoors as much as possible, where science has shown transmission is far less likely, would not only help our economy, our business owners, our parents and students, but also provide a safer space for much needed social interaction and physical fitness.

I know that Hawai'i must spend about \$320 million in federal funds by December 30, 2020. 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 shift to utilizing outdoor spaces and our built environment to promote the health and economy of our community. Build infrastructure and/or reimagine current built environment, and support permit or policy changes to allow for students/schools/childcare and businesses (retail, restaurants, gyms, etc.) to engage in activities outside where covid-19 transmission is much lower than in enclosed/indoor spaces.
- A lack of affordable, accessible, SAFE childcare

- A need for HELP with elementary-school-age children who are participating in distance learning through DOE and need constant supervision and help while parents need to be at work or working from home
- 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
- 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,
Katie Folio