

RES25-185

Testimony

MISC. COMM. 412

*HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP)

***HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS (HHP) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Aug 19, 2025 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 3

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Jacob Wiencek	Email: Jacob.m.wiencek@pm.me	Zip: 96815
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 13, 2025 @ 04:20 PM
Testimony: Aloha Committee Members, Finding appropriate and affordable housing is far too challenging for too many of our city's citizens. While Honolulu is engaged with numerous and ultimately productive housing projects, the temporary disruption to residents needs to be addressed. This proposal is a solid first step to ensuring everyone can find housing. I urge the Committee to SUPPORT this resolution.		
Name: Doneileen Willets	Email: lehua27@gmail.com	Zip: 96819
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 18, 2025 @ 10:38 AM
Testimony: Aloha Committee Members, Finding appropriate and affordable housing is far too challenging for too many of our city's citizens. While Honolulu is engaged with numerous and ultimately productive housing projects, the temporary disruption to residents needs to be addressed. The Aloha State is officially the second most expensive state in the United States, according to new 2025 rankings. This gives reasons on why it is necessary to ensure everyone can find housing. A 1 bdrm aptmt rental is approximately \$2,100/mo., this excludes the additional costs of utilities, water, gas & electric. Our state is also ranked number 1 for the highest cost of groceries. So when you displace residents to build "affordable housing," you must take care of them and make sure they do not become permanently displaced. It is vital to obtain relocation assistance, with dependable resources, respect and courtesy for all. I urge the Committee to SUPPORT this resolution. Mahalo! Doneileen Willets		
Name: Deja Ostrowski	Email: dejao@hawaii.edu	Zip: 96822
Representing: Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i	Position: Support	Submitted: Aug 19, 2025 @ 09:45 AM



Medical-Legal Partnership
for Children in Hawai'i

RESOLUTION 25-185:

URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO DEVELOP A RESIDENTIAL RELOCATION PROGRAM
THAT INCLUDES A DEDICATED POSITION TO ASSIST RESIDENTS WITH RELOCATION NEEDS
RELATED TO CITY-FUNDED HOUSING PROJECTS.

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS & PARKS

August 19, 2025; 2:30pm

Aloha mai e Chair Tupola, Vice Chair Tulba, and members of the Committees:

The Medical-Legal Partnership for Children in Hawai'i provides free, direct legal services to patients in community health settings. Many of our clients are low-income tenants and tenants in affordable housing re-development projects benefitting from City and County subsidies and development incentives. We testify in **STRONG SUPPORT** for **RES25-185**.

Currently, there are almost no clear and enforceable state or county level displacement protections or services for tenants in projects that are being re-developed under state and county schemes. While Federal law does provide some long-term relocation assistance for limited demolition projects, there are no clear requirements in City or State projects. Most importantly, there are no regulations that require displaced tenants to get relocation services or even the first preference or right to return for projects funded by the County or State. Learning from the lessons of redevelopment projects currently displacing tenants, our City must move to protect and prioritize our community first, by supporting tenant relocation that include all three prongs of good anti-displacement programs: (1) offer tenants relocation assistance, (2) provide robust relocation counseling, and (3) offer the right to return or first preference for families in the new development.

The most important part of this resolution is to use already existing City resources to ensure the critical component of affordable housing projects: providing relocation counseling to displaced community members. Without support, tenants are left with, at best, miscommunication, and at worst, community push-back. This has been made abundantly clear in the redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace low-rise, where a private developer is implementing a \$200M+ project that displaced hundreds of tenants. Serious problems and likely unlawful actions—including miscommunication, lack of language access, sending tenants to housing that was in disrepair or didn't exist—led many of the tenants to file suit against the State Public Housing Authority because of these failures to provide mandated relocation counseling.

As our City and County moves to implement and build affordable housing – increasingly through public-private partnerships similar to the privatization and redevelopment of Kūhiō Park Terrace low-rise – new laws must be enacted to protect displacement of local tenant families. **Without relocation counseling, or with poor**



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relocation counseling by for-profit out-of-state entities that do not know our community, local families are displaced and anti-development sentiment grows. We urge the County to make clear that displaced families receive services, and implement a position to ensure that the counseling is provided by people and entities who know, and are accountable to, our local community.

Accordingly I respectfully ask that you **PASS RESO25-185** to protect our local families.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Deja Ostrowski, Esq.
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