



## IN THE NEWS

### Real Change is Possible - Advocate with Us

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Part of our work to end the cycle of homelessness in Hawaii involves working with legislators to advocate for systems change. In fact, this year, I am serving as Advocacy Chair for Partners in Care Oahu, an organization whose mission is to coordinate care services between all of the diverse organizations on Oahu dedicated to addressing homelessness.

**Real change is possible and we are working together to make it happen.** We are particularly interested in

legislative bills relating to homelessness, caring for the mentally ill, and the development of new housing for all income levels. These are the bills that *have the potential to change the system and make Oahu a better place for all to live*. They have the ability to help us treat people suffering from debilitating mental illness or methamphetamine and other addictions. They have the power to help lift people from the grip of the street and into a brighter future.

In the current legislative session, there are several bills that aim to chip away at the barriers limiting our ability to get people the help they need. Your voice matters in these proceedings.

**Please join us to support these proposals and submit testimony in support of these bills.** Honolulu Hale is currently closed to the public due to the pandemic, so you can simply submit written testimony online or opt to present verbal testimony live via Zoom.

To sign up to deliver testimony or to learn more about these bills, visit: <https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

### **Bills we are supporting:**

1. **SB199** which would streamline the current ACT Statute by expediting the appointment of a Guardian Ad Litem upon submission of petition, and also removing the public defender's involvement in these cases filed in family court. (House version is HB345)
2. **HB310** which would allow treatment for up to 90 days, when someone is brought to the Emergency Room on oral exparte (MH2), or meets criteria for emergency hospitalization (MH4), or civil commitment (MH6) and is found to be lacking decisional capacity.

### **Additional bills we are interested in:**

*(still awaiting bill numbers)*

1. Requiring mandatory substance abuse treatment for frequent violators of city ordinance related to public inebriation
2. The expungement of criminal records from crimes related to homeless (such as sleeping on the sidewalk), after time or penalty has been served, to enable a fresh start for those exiting homelessness.
3. Multiple housing bills designed to promote new housing development at all levels in all districts
4. Merging various state offices involved in housing development under one coordinator

If you wish to learn more about these bills, get notified during testimony windows, and/or to get on our advocacy email list, please email [jillw@ihshawaii.org](mailto:jillw@ihshawaii.org).

Mahalo for ensuring that real change is possible.



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