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PHOCUSED

PROTECTING HAWAII'S OHANA, CHILDREN, UNDER SERVED, ELDERLY AND DISABLED

P8, Bill 20
P9, Bill 21

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TO: Councilmember Ernest Y. Martin, Chair
Councilmember Ikaika Anderson, Vice Chair
Members, Honolulu City Council

FROM: Scott Morishige, Executive Director

HEARING: **Wednesday, May 6, 2015 at 10:00 a.m.**

Submitting Testimony in SUPPORT of Bill 20 & Bill 21

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony *in support* of Bills 20 and 21, which would enable the creation and expanded use of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) for rental housing. PHOCUSED is a nonprofit membership and advocacy organization, which works together with community stakeholders to impact program and policy change for the most vulnerable in our community, such as the homeless. We believe this Resolution will help to address homelessness in Honolulu by expanding our community's options for truly affordable rental housing.

The Need for Affordable Housing

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, Hawaii currently has the 2nd highest rate of homelessness per capita in the nation. The development of affordable housing is a key strategy to reducing our high rate of homelessness – especially in Honolulu. Over the past 12 months, PHOCUSED has surveyed 3,100 homeless individuals and families across Oahu to assess their level of need and determine appropriate interventions. Based on our survey data, *nearly a quarter (24%, or 744 homeless households) indicate a need simply for affordable housing* – meaning that they do not require case management or intensive social services, but would be able to successfully transition to stable housing if affordable rental options were available. Furthermore, the need for affordable housing expands beyond the homeless; it is a critical issue for all of the vulnerable populations PHOCUSED represents – low-income families with children, the elderly, and the disabled.

ADUs are a proven housing solution

ADUs have long been used on Oahu as “ohana dwellings,” which have provided affordable rental housing for adult children and aging parents in many local families. However, current “ohana zoning” restrictions have effectively banned the use of ADUs for non-relatives. Expanding the use of ADUs to non-family members will add new rental units to Oahu's general housing stock. ADUs are a straightforward way to add to our affordable rental housing inventory without government subsidy, since homeowners cover the cost of development and the rents charged for ADUs are often affordable to low- and moderate-income renters. The development of ADU will also stimulate our local economy by creating work for local builders and contractors, and providing ongoing government support through additional revenue from property taxes. The Hawaii Appleseed Center for Law & Economic Justice, which is a PHOCUSED member organization, has done extensive research on ADUs and have produced a report that is available online at <http://hiappleseed.org>.

PHOCUSED appreciates the clear commitment of the Council to create affordable housing for all members of our community, and once again offer our full support for Resolution 14-200. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact our office at 521-7462 or by email at admin@phocused-hawaii.org.