



PARTNERS IN CARE

Oahu Continuum of Care

P8, Bill 20
P9, Bill 21

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Partners in Care is a coalition of Oahu's homeless service providers, government representatives and community stakeholders working together in partnership to end homelessness.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF Bill 20: LUO Amendment relating to Accessory Dwelling Units; AND Bill 21: Accessory Dwelling Units

TO: Chair Ernest Y. Martin; Vice Chair Ikaika Anderson, and Members of the City Council of the City and County of Honolulu

FROM: Betty Lou Larson, Advocacy Committee, Partners in Care

Hearing: **Wednesday, May 8, 2015, 10:00 AM; City Council Chamber**

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Dear Chair Martin, Vice Chair Anderson, and Members of the City Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony **in strong support** of **Bill 20 and Bill 21**, which would amend the land use ordinance to establish accessory dwelling units as a permitted use and to encourage the creation of affordable housing. I am Betty Lou Larson from the Advocacy Committee of Partners in Care. We are a coalition of service providers and many others in our community dedicated to ending homelessness.

Now is the time to act to create new and decent housing options. These bills may be the most important bills to come before this Council. You have the opportunity to create hope and housing for thousands of local folks--people like the veterans highlighted in a 4/27/15 Star Bulletin article who have housing vouchers but still cannot find a place. We need to end veteran homelessness and ADUs would create homes, without government subsidies to build these homes. We need to end homelessness for families. ADUs could provide new and decent housing to prevent families from falling into homelessness.

Housing needs are well documented: The 2014 Housing Study, recently released, finds that about 14,000 rental units are needed on Oahu by 2020 for people under 80% of the Area Median income (AMI). **The need for housing has dramatically risen since the last rental study in 2011.** 78% of people living in poverty pay over fifty percent of their income for rent. We need to focus on new ideas such as ADUs to create more housing.

Partners in Care supports ADUs that address the concerns of neighborhoods on size limits (e.g. maximum 800 SF) and owner occupants to help retain the character of the neighborhood. A minimum rental period would also work to ensure compatibility with neighborhoods. ADUs can help struggling homeowners to be able to pay their mortgages and plan for their families future. With limited land and expensive costs on Oahu for new construction of rentals, ADUs can maximize use of Oahu's lands. New rentals would be encouraged that are code-compliant and owners would pay all relevant fees, e.g. sewer fees and GET on the rental income. There are many benefits to the community when ADUs are permitted and appropriately regulated

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important issue. Please contact me at (808) 373-0356 or bettylou.larson@catholiccharitieshawaii.org if you have any questions.

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