

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Hawaiians Share Data to Support Institutional Discrimination by DHHL Against Beneficiaries

Kapolei, Hawaii -- At the Hawaiian Homes Commission meeting on Wednesday, February 18, various Beneficiaries from Molokai, Kauai, Maui and Oahu testified separately on experiences with DHHL that support a pattern of Institutional Discrimination against its own beneficiaries. Each of the individual beneficiaries informed the Commission on the unwillingness of the Director at DHHL to be responsive, sometimes taking years to respond to requests, and an unwillingness to solve challenges with the expertise available in the Beneficiary community.

In November 2014, after the general election, one Beneficiary nonprofit, Hawaiian Community Assets courageously sent a formal letter to Governor Ige informing him of the clear pattern of discrimination occurring at DHHL, particularly under the leadership of DHHL Director Jobie Masagatani. At the Commission meeting on Wednesday, Lahela Williams, 27, a program coordinator at the nonprofit, presented compelling evidence to the Commission on how DHHL uses an internal DHHL Scoring Process within the State Procurement policy to discriminate with clear intent against organizations the Director refuses to work with.

Williams, from a lifelong beneficiary family from Nanakuli, accessed DHHL records under the public information access laws to examine a June 2014 procurement by DHHL to award more than \$1 million dollars to a single consultant, with two staff and no HUD certification to deliver financial services to homesteaders on Oahu, and an Oahu nonprofit counseling agency to serve neighbor islands, that also has no offices or staff on the neighbor islands, as well as very little expertise on the unique land and mortgage systems on Hawaiian Home Lands.

"HCA was founded by beneficiaries and has been delivering homebuyer and foreclosure prevention to homestead communities for 15 years," said Jeff Gilbreath, HCA Executive Director. "We have three offices on three islands with services and products at 24 remote locations across the entire State. We currently have a staff of 11 with four AmeriCorps VISTA members and the largest portfolio of homestead clients in the state, yet HCA was shut out of any funding to serve beneficiaries. It's difficult to have to say this to any government agency, but the evidence is overwhelming and very clear that DHHL practices institutional discrimination, there is no other explanation for the type of treatment HCA has received by DHHL over the last three years."

Williams was professional, direct, and laid out a spreadsheet of the DHHL scoring sheets side by side of the five respondents to the DHHL request for proposals in 2014. She presented each internal DHHL scoring criteria, and gave striking examples of two contracts worth over \$1 million going to organizations that did not submit the information required by the Notice to Service Providers. At the same time, three additional respondents - including HCA - submitted all information required by the Notice to Service Providers but did not receive contracts. She also showed how DHHL arbitrarily disqualified another beneficiary nonprofit, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) and refused to even score

their proposal. "It's clear from the spreadsheet, that CNHA met the criteria required of the solicitation and should not have been disqualified from the evaluation process. It's quite unfortunate that through a sub-standard review process, DHHL staff were able to refuse to score the nonprofit," Williams said.

"The data was quite shocking when reviewed side-by-side," said Napali Woode, Senior Vice President of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA). "We submitted a proposal in that 2014 procurement and weren't notified until after the \$1 million in contracts were executed that DHHL decided to not even score our proposal. To be honest, I was not surprised when DHHL finally told us they disqualified us, because the last three years under the current DHHL Director has been nothing but abusive toward CNHA, zero collaboration, which we have never figured out why. I agree with HCA, DHHL practices institutional discrimination, engages in politics instead of working to implement great policy and great services for beneficiaries of the trust."

The letter formally informing Governor Ige in November 2014 about the insider abuses, discrepancies and institutional discrimination practices by DHHL has gone unanswered, except that Governor Ige reappointed the DHHL Director that has been in charge of DHHL for the last 3 years.

The Homestead Policy Coalition consists of four of the largest statewide beneficiary organizations with expertise on the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA), the Sovereign Councils of the Hawaiian Homeland Assembly (SCHHA), the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA), the Association of Hawaiians for Homestead Lands (AHHL) and the Homestead Community Development Corporation (HCDC). The HHCA was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1920 establishing the Hawaiian Home Lands Trust for native Hawaiians. For more information, contact policy@hawaiiancouncil.org.