

Homelessness in Hawaii

There are a lot of problems in Hawaii, but the main one in my opinion that is the worst is homelessness. Homelessness affects the whole world in a very bad way. Studies show that almost 2% of the world's population is homeless. Some causes of homelessness are lack of affordable housing, unemployment, poverty, mental illness, addiction and poor wages. As for Hawaii, in 2018 we had 6,530 homeless people on any given day and we had the highest homeless rate per capita in the nation. More than 300 of those are homeless kids living in Hawaii. I can't imagine what life would be like living on the street, not having anywhere to sleep and not knowing if I will have anything to eat. If we don't change this now, it will get worse and more people will become homeless. Taxes will rise, rents will rise, along with many other costs, forcing people to join the homeless population. We must try and do something now.

If we do nothing now in 50 years, homelessness will increase even more and be more widespread, affecting more people and communities. Look at where we are today. Taxes, utility bills, food, gas and other products are getting more expensive every day. Our cost of living is already so high and it continues to rise. If there are people struggling now, just imagine 50 years from now when everything is even more expensive. Homelessness will continue to grow and grow and become a bigger and bigger problem. The United States government stated that it would take at least 20 billion dollars to end homelessness for good. If we do nothing, what do you think it would cost to end homelessness 50 years from now? Could we even afford to end homelessness? Everyone would know someone or be related to someone who is homeless. Or maybe even end up being homeless themselves. More and more kids would become homeless.

More homeless people would continue to die at a young age because they have poor health or have an addiction problem. There would be more crime and more pollution. Neighborhoods would lose their beauty and sense of community. There would be no end to homelessness.

If I was in a position of power, I would continue to make more homeless centers and I would make homeless snack shops where everything would cost under a dollar. This way homeless people could hopefully afford it and they would have at least something small to eat every day. I would get communities more involved in helping those that are homeless in their area by having "Help feed your neighbor" events. Every Saturday and Sunday in a specific area in your hometown, there would be people volunteering to serve a good meal for as many homeless people we can find on the streets. I would want to prevent further homelessness as much as possible and not allow anyone else to come to Hawaii who didn't already have a job here. I also would create programs to help people get jobs and learn life skills so they can maintain it. We need to develop more temporary housing options, like having a legal area where they can live in a tent, shipping container or igloo type of home. Help them to create their own community where people could live together and try to work together to get themselves back up on their feet and start a new and better life. We can open donation centers, have fundraisers and hold online collections to help raise money to help the homeless. If everyone could give a little, together we can make a big difference.

I know Clarence T.C. Ching would support my mission because he was also trying to stop homelessness in Hawaii and to better his community. He looked for ways to help people and his foundation continues that today. He developed a 822 unit apartment called the Kukui Gardens. It was developed for low income residents and families who were struggling

financially. He made money through his foundation and he didn't take any money from the Kukui Gardens project, not one single penny. This really showed what kind of man he really was and how much he wanted to try and help stop homelessness in Hawaii. He also developed housing in Moanalua, Fort Shafter, Tripler, Red Hill, Moanalua Valley and Salt Lake. He loved to help out the community in anyway and will always be remembered as a hard working, humble man.

If we act now, we can change the future in many positive ways. First, we would not have as many homeless people in Hawaii. We would have less kids sleeping on the streets and less people dying at a young age. There would be less crime and more people involved in their community to help make it a better place. We also could limit tax increases as we wouldn't need to spend that much money on homeless shelters and other efforts to decrease homelessness. Homelessness is a big issue we need to help fix now so that we can make the future brighter and easier and one day we could possibly stop homelessness for good. Imagine what that would be like and how beautiful that would be.