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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTIONS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the *State v. Obrero*  
2 decision issued on September 8, 2022 (2022 WL 4102031), by the  
3 Hawai'i Supreme Court construed section 801-1, Hawaii Revised  
4 Statutes, to invalidate the longstanding practice of initiating  
5 prosecution of felony cases by complaint upon a finding of  
6 probable cause after a preliminary hearing. For the last forty  
7 years, article I, section 10, of the Hawaii State Constitution  
8 has stated, in part, that "[n]o person shall be held to answer  
9 for a capital or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a  
10 presentment or indictment of a grand jury or upon a finding of  
11 probable cause after a preliminary hearing held as provided by  
12 law or upon information in writing signed by a legal prosecuting  
13 officer..." (emphasis added). As a result, the Hawaii State  
14 Constitution has been interpreted to allow prosecutors to  
15 initiate a prosecution by complaint upon a judge's finding of  
16 probable cause after a preliminary hearing, by obtaining a grand



1 jury indictment, or, if eligible, by written information  
2 pursuant to chapter 806, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

3       The legislature further finds that repeated attempts at  
4 initiating prosecution of the same felony offense by presenting  
5 the same evidence to both a grand jury and judge, or returning  
6 to the same forum, is not contemplated by the Hawaii State  
7 Constitution. Whether by presenting the allegations to a  
8 different grand jury after a prior grand jury did not find  
9 sufficient evidence for an indictment, or by using both the  
10 grand jury and preliminary hearing processes after the first  
11 forum rejected the evidence, the prosecution should not have  
12 multiple opportunities to present the same evidence in hopes of  
13 achieving a different outcome.

14       The purpose of this Act is to:

- 15       (1) Conform the Hawaii Revised Statutes to article I,  
16            section 10, of the Hawaii State Constitution;
- 17       (2) Clarify that felony prosecutions may be initiated by  
18            one of three methods:
  - 19            (A) Complaint through the preliminary hearing  
20                process;
  - 21            (B) Indictment by grand jury; or



1 (C) If the felony charge is eligible under section  
2 806-83, Hawaii Revised Statutes, written  
3 information pursuant to the Hawaii State  
4 Constitution and chapter 806, Hawaii Revised  
5 Statutes; and

6 (3) Stipulate that multiple attempts to initiate  
7 prosecution of the same felony offense by presenting  
8 the same evidence to a grand jury or judge, or both,  
9 either through the same initial charging method or an  
10 alternative method, or in different forums, shall not  
11 be permitted, except in certain circumstances.

12 SECTION 2. Section 801-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
13 amended to read as follows:

14 "§801-1 Indictment, complaint, or information. (a) No  
15 person shall be subject to be tried and sentenced to be punished  
16 in any court, for an alleged offense, unless upon indictment,  
17 complaint, or information, except for offenses within the  
18 jurisdiction of a district court or in summary proceedings for  
19 contempt. For any felony offense to be tried and sentenced upon  
20 complaint, a finding of probable cause after a preliminary



1 hearing, or a waiver of the probable cause determination at the  
2 preliminary hearing, shall be required.

3 (b) If initiation of a felony prosecution is sought via an  
4 indictment by a grand jury or a finding of probable cause after  
5 a preliminary hearing, and is denied, initiation of a felony  
6 prosecution for the same offense using the same or an available  
7 alternative charging method or by seeking a different judge or  
8 jury shall not be permitted unless:

- 9 (1) Additional material evidence is presented;
- 10 (2) The initial hearing was before a grand jury and there  
11 is a subsequent finding of grand jury misconduct or  
12 grand jury counsel misconduct; or
- 13 (3) A court, upon application of the prosecutor, finds  
14 good cause to allow a subsequent presentation;  
15 provided that this paragraph shall not apply if  
16 prosecutors have previously sought a subsequent  
17 presentation for good cause."

18 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

19 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: *Rep. Ann*

JAN 23 2023



# H.B. NO. 810

**Report Title:**

Criminal Procedure; Prosecution; Felonies; Complaint;  
Information; Preliminary Hearing; Grand Jury

**Description:**

Specifies that a person may be tried and sentenced for certain alleged felony offenses through the complaint and preliminary hearing process, indictment by grand jury, or by written information. Specifies that multiple attempts to initiate a felony prosecution for the same offense, either through the same initial charging method or an alternative method, or in different forums, shall not be permitted, except in certain circumstances.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

