



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third State Legislature, 2025 Session

Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Tuesday, April 1, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference

By:

Michelle D. Acosta
Deputy Chief Court Administrator
District Court of the First Circuit

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: House Bill No. 1231, H.D. 1, S. D. 1, Relating to Traffic Safety

Purpose: Prohibits the use of facial recognition software in the operation of any photo red light imaging detector systems. Increases vehicle weight taxes to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund. Clarifies the citations and summons procedures for the Automated Speed Enforcement Detector Systems Program. Authorizes automated speed enforcement systems to be implemented along a road or highway by the State or counties within two hundred feet of a school zone identified by the safe routes to school advisory committee. Authorizes the State Highway Safety and Modernization Council to recommend twenty-five dangerous intersections for photo red light imaging systems. Authorizes the Safe Routes to School Advisory Council to recommend twenty-five dangerous school zones for automated speed enforcement systems. Appropriates funds out of the State Highway Fund for deposit into and out of the Automated Speed Enforcement Systems Program Special Fund for fiscal year 2025-2026. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)



Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary takes no position on the merits of the bill and submits the following concerns for the Legislature's consideration.

House Bill No. 1231, H.D. 1, S. D. 1 would expand the photo red light imaging detectors to school zones as recommended by the State Highway Safety and Modernization Council and expand the automated speed enforcement detector system to roads or highways within two hundred feet of a school zone as identified by the Safe Routes to School Advisory Council.

Based on available data, the 10 existing photo red light imaging detection systems issued an average 1,991 citations per month in 2024. In a recent KHON2 News story from January 2025 it was reported that during a one-week period the automated speed camera system recorded 22,000 vehicles exceeding the posted speed limit by at least 11 miles per hour. The Judiciary is concerned about the effects the potential volume of citations will have on the district courts.

These citations must be processed by the district courts. The high volume would likely overwhelm current court resources. The third-party vendor selected by the Department of Transportation would provide electronic copies of traffic citations to the district courts throughout the state. However, the Judiciary's Information Management System (JIMS) is not currently equipped to pull data from the law enforcement citations and transfer the data into court records. Instead, all of the information in the citations (name, address, driver's license number, location of the offense, vehicle make and model, vehicle license plate, etc.) is manually entered by court staff into JIMS, similar to the way that handwritten notes on a receipt need to be manually entered into a billing system in order to create an invoice. Once that information is manually entered by court staff, court staff then processes requests for hearings and written statements from motorists contesting the citations or explaining mitigating circumstances, schedules court dates, and prepares minutes from court hearings. A dramatic increase in traffic citations would likely overwhelm current court resources, potentially to the detriment of other types of cases heard by District Court.

The Judiciary's Information Technology Systems Department (ITSD) is looking for technological solutions to efficiently receive and process the high volume of electronic citations. This process of researching and procuring the most appropriate solution will require time and possibly an appropriation.

The Judiciary requests that any expansion of the red-light and/or speed camera system take into consideration the impact on the district courts statewide and allow adequate time for the courts to work with the Department of Transportation prior to expanding the traffic enforcement camera systems. The Judiciary requests that the Department of Transportation inform the Judiciary of the locations selected by the respective councils to ensure that the district courts in the selected areas are appropriately staffed to receive an increase in citations.



House Bill No. 1231, H.D. 1, S. D. 1, Relating to Traffic Safety
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
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Regarding Section 3 and 4 of this measure, the Judiciary respectfully notes for the committees consideration that under Hawai'i Revised Statute (HRS) § 291C-5, a \$10 surcharge for the Safe Routes to School program special fund will be added to the automated speed enforcement citations as HRS 291C-108 is within Part X of the chapter.

The Judiciary would request an effective date of January 1, 2027. This date will allow the Judiciary to assess whether an appropriation will be needed to implement House Bill No. 1231, H.D. 1, S. D. 1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

April 1, 2025
10:00 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 211 & Videoconference

H.B. 1231, H.D. 1, S.D. 1
RELATING TO TRAFFIC SAFETY

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports** H.B. 1231, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, which prohibits the use of facial recognition software in the operation of any photo red light imaging detector systems. Increases vehicle weight taxes to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund. Clarifies the citations and summons procedures for the Automated Speed Enforcement Detector Systems Program. Authorizes automated speed enforcement systems to be implemented along a road or highway by the State or counties within 200 feet of a school zone identified by the safe routes to school advisory committee. Authorizes the State Highway Safety and Modernization Council to recommend 25 dangerous intersections for photo red light imaging systems. Authorizes the Safe Routes to School Advisory Council to recommend 25 dangerous school zones for automated speed enforcement systems. Appropriates funds out of the State Highway Fund for deposit into and out of the Automated Speed Enforcement Systems Program Special Fund for fiscal year 2025-2026.

The HDOT supports replacing the threshold speed by which to have exceeded the posted maximum speed limit to cause a summons or citation from five miles per hour to an unspecified speed, as well as adding language to specify that any summons or citations issued or convictions under the Automated Speed Enforcement System Program shall not be recorded on a person's traffic abstract and shall not be used for insurance purposes in the provision of motor vehicle insurance coverage;

The HDOT plans to begin expanding the effective photo red light imaging detector systems and implementing the automated speed enforcement systems later this year. The same criteria, that was used to pick the pilot locations, will be used to select future locations. The criteria included number of crashes caused by drivers who disregarded the traffic signal, volume of traffic as well as traffic citations for disregarding the signal.

While we support the intent of this bill to install the automated photo enforcement program in school zones, the HDOT stresses the importance of using the same

selection criteria statewide to ensure consistency within the program. This consistency is vital as the data will need to justify the selection of the location will be examined in court.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY

TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

MOST STRONGLY SUPPORT HB862 HD1 SD1

RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION

March 29, 2025

Aloha, Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole. Our neighborhood board passed resolutions and outgoing letters to the Department of Education stating our requirement for Pearl City to prevent bus service disruptions for our students. **I most STRONGLY SUPPORT HB862 HD1 SD1.**

Our student bus service for Pearl City requires a strong infrastructure and uninterrupted service. The Department of Education should have high standards and accountability. During the past few years, the DOE could not meet our requirements to pick up all our students in Pearl City. As time passed while they were trying to find and qualify more bus drivers or higher private bus companies, they could have used smaller vehicles where a CDL license was not required for drivers. I ask you to please pass legislation to authorize use of motorcoaches, small buses, and vans to transport students until the DOE can meet the demand with regular school buses.

We should not leave any students behind as we have experienced over the past years of disrupted service and many students having to find their own personal transportation to get to their schools.

Please approve HB862 HD1 SD1. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray



Testimony in Support for HB1231 - Relating to Transportation
Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM) and Committee on the Judiciary (JDC)
Tuesday, April 1st, 2025

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the WAM/JDC committees,
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **SUPPORT for HB1231 HD1 SD1**, which would increase the vehicle weight taxes for certain vehicles and deposit that revenue into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund. The measure would also create a number of regulations regarding the use of photo red light imaging systems and automated speed enforcement.

Safe Routes to School Program

There is an urgent need to improve the safety of vulnerable roadway users in Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, there were 102 traffic fatalities statewide and a staggering 42% of those fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists.¹ Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 49% of pedestrian fatalities on O'ahu occurred on state-owned roadways.² Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries are also growing. For example, the average annual number of statewide pedestrian fatalities rose by 26 percent during the 2014–2018 time period, when compared to the 2009–2013 time period.³

The SRTS program encourages keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects within a one-mile radius of public schools. Despite the importance of this program, it is severely underfunded. The current dedicated annual revenue source for the SRTS program are traffic violation surcharges. At the same time the *Navahine* agreement mandates that Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded.⁴ Implementing the state's share of bike facilities on O'ahu alone will cost \$168 million.⁵

With a majority of these projects located near schools, it's critical that the SRTS program funding be enhanced. Generating this funding through an increased state vehicle registration tax on larger, more dangerous vehicles has multiple safety benefits. In addition to generating funding for pedestrian safety

¹ HDOT, "Traffic Fatalities Up 10% From 2023," December 31, 2024.

² CCH-DTS, "O'ahu Vision Zero Action Plan," 2024.

³ State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, "State of Hawai'i Traffic Fatalities," 2022.

⁴ State of Hawai'i Climate Commission, "Transportation Projects," 2025.

<https://climate.hawaii.gov/grants-to-projects-bridge/transportation-projects/>.

⁵ City & County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services, "O'ahu Bike Plan Update," December 2019.

https://www8.honolulu.gov/dts/wpcontent/uploads/sites/45/2024/04/TED-Final_2019_Oahu_Bike_Plan_Update.pdf

projects, it also aims to reduce the prevalence of large, dangerous vehicles on the road.

In the U.S., proliferation of larger vehicles has significantly increased over recent decades. Oversized vehicles (pickups, SUVs, and minivans) now make up over 75% of all cars sold in the U.S.⁶ People hit by heavy vehicles—weighing more than 4,000 pounds — are two to three times more likely to die than people hit by smaller cars, a major issue in the context of increasing pedestrian fatalities.⁷ The increased hood height also makes it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians, especially children. A recent study from the University of Hawai'i found that a 10 cm increase in a vehicle's front-end height is associated with a 22% increase in pedestrian fatality risk.⁸



Large trucks and SUVs have a significant "front blind zone" where drivers cannot see children or smaller pedestrians directly in front of the vehicle (source: Smart Growth America)

Red Light Cameras and Automated Enforcement

The 2023 Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment for Hawai'i noted that 57% of pedestrian crashes happen at intersections. This highlights the need to increase compliance with traffic signals and reduce speeding and at these locations. Automated cameras have been found to reduce speeding and crash-related injuries, while yielding cost savings.⁹ They have been found to reduce racial- and gender-based disparities in traffic stops.¹⁰ However, automated enforcement also pose due-process and privacy concerns.¹¹ To address these concerns, the Vera Institute of Justice developed a set of recommendations included in their 2021 *Non-Police Responses to Traffic Safety*¹² policy brief. These recommendations are provided below:

- Transferring automated camera operations to non-police agencies.

⁶ Henry, Jim, "Light Trucks Now Outselling Cars 3-to-1," *Forbes*, January 3, 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/wheels/news/light-trucks-now-outselling-cars/>.

⁷ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "New car assessment program," 2015. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/12/16/2015-31323/new-car-assessment-program>.

⁸ Justin Tyndall, "The effect of front-end vehicle height on pedestrian death risk," *Economics of Transportation*, Volume 37, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecotra.2024.100342>

⁹ Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), "Speed and Red Light Cameras," 2021. <https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/speed%20and%20red%20light%20cameras>; Shin, Kangwon, et al., "Evaluation of the Scottsdale Loop 101 Automated Speed Enforcement Demonstration Program, Accident Analysis & Prevention," *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 41, no. 3, 393-403, 2009; and Libby J. Thomas, Raghavan Srinivasan, Lawrence E. Decina et al., "Safety Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement Programs: Critical Review of International Literature," *Transportation Research Record* 2078, no. 1, 117-126, 2008.

¹⁰ Sarah Marx Quintanar, "Man vs. Machine: An Investigation of Speeding Ticket Disparities Based on Gender and Race," *Journal of Applied Economics* 20, no. 1, 1-28, 2017. <https://perma.cc/9X3E-6TEX>.

¹¹ Caroline J. Rodier, Susan Shaheen, and Ellen Cavanaugh, "Automated Speed Enforcement in the U.S.: A Review of the Literature on Benefits and Barriers to Implementation," Paper Submitted to the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, July, 2007. <https://perma.cc/VYW7-5PCU>.

¹² Vera Institute of Justice, "Investing in Evidence-Based Alternatives to Policing: Non-Police Responses to Traffic Safety," August, 2021. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/alternatives-to-policing-traffic-enforcement-fact-sheet.pdf>.

- Banning the use of facial recognition software.
- Requiring oversight boards to monitor the volume and type of traffic citations these tools generate and how they impact communities.

We are happy to see HB1231 HD1 SD1 incorporate some of the above recommendations, such as prohibiting use of facial recognition software. We urge the state to consider additional measures, such as oversight boards, to monitor who and how citations generated from automated enforcement are impacting Hawai'i residents.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Senate Committee on Ways and Means & Judiciary

04/01/2025 10:00AM
CR 211 & Videoconference

HB 1231 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO AUTOMATED SPEED ENFORCEMENT SYSTEMS PROGRAM.

Dear Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, and Vice Chairs Inouye and Gabbard, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB1231 HD1 SD1** which prohibits the use of facial recognition software in the operation of any photo red light imaging detector systems; increases vehicle weight taxes to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund; clarifies the citations and summons procedures for the Automated Speed Enforcement Detector Systems Program; authorizes automated speed enforcement systems to be implemented along a road or highway by the State or counties within two hundred feet of a school zone identified by the safe routes to school advisory committee; authorizes the State Highway Safety and Modernization Council to recommend twenty-five dangerous intersections for photo red light imaging systems; authorizes the Safe Routes to School Advisory Council to recommend twenty-five dangerous school zones for automated speed enforcement systems; and appropriates funds out of the State Highway Fund for deposit into and out of the Automated Speed Enforcement Systems Program Special Fund for fiscal year 2025-2026.

Half of the deaths in red light running crashes involve vulnerable road users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, and occupants of non-violating vehicles. In 2024, the State of Hawaii Department of Transportation conducted an annual behavioral study, where one-fifth of all drivers admitted to driving through crosswalks without checking for pedestrians and one-fifth of drivers admitted to running red lights. Implementing this bill will enhance safety in areas where some of our most vulnerable people, keiki, are walking, biking, and rolling to get to school. Depositing fines collected for running red lights into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund will help to further augment transportation projects and programs focused on getting our keiki to school safely.

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe, efficient, and resilient transportation system that serves the mobility needs of all people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 10:37:19 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly Hudik	Testifying for PATH- People for Active Transportation Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the WAM and JDC committees,

My name is Kelly Hudik and I am from PATH-People for Active Transportation Hawaii, we represent safe transportation on Hawaii Island and are based in Kailua Kona. We urge the senate WAM/JDC committees to pass HB1231, which would provide much needed funding for the Safe Routes to School program and create guidelines for use of red-light cameras and automated speed enforcement.

There is an urgent need to improve roadway safety as each year there are over 100 roadway fatalities, with hundreds more seriously injured. In 2024, 42% of roadway fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists. The SRTS program addresses this issue by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects near public schools.

Mahalo for considering this measure,

Kelly Hudik

PATH-People for Active Transportation Hawaii



HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS
Chair

*John A. Burns School of Medicine,
Department of Pediatrics*

Titimaema Ta'ase, JD

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State of Hawai'i, Deputy Public Defender

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University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu

Jennifer José Lo, MD

Hawai'i Health Partners

Misty Pacheco, DrPH

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Kathleen Roche, MS, RN, CENP

Kaiser Permanente

Dina Shek, JD

*Medical-Legal Partnership
For Children in Hawai'i*

Garret Sugai

HMSA

JoAnn Tsark, MPH

*John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native
Hawaiian Research Office*

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

COVID-19 Response

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 31, 2025

To: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Judiciary

RE: Support for HB 1231 HD1 SD1, Relating to Traffic Safety

Hrg: April 1st, 2025, 10:00 AM, Conference Room 211

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in **strong support of HB1231 HD1 SD1**, which would increase the vehicle weight taxes for certain vehicles and deposit that revenue into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund. The measure would also create a number of regulations regarding the use of photo red light imaging systems and automated speed enforcement.

There is an urgent need to improve the safety of vulnerable roadway users in Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, there were 102 traffic fatalities statewide, and a staggering 42% of those fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists.³ The 2023 Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment for Hawai'i noted that 57% of pedestrian crashes happen at intersections.

Safe Routes to School

The SRTS program encourages keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects within a one-mile radius of public schools. Despite the importance of this program, it is severely underfunded. The current dedicated annual revenue source for the SRTS program is traffic violation surcharges. The benefits of SRTS include increased exercise for keiki, but also reducing student absence and tardiness, and decreased traffic congestion.

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ HDOT, "Traffic Fatalities Up 10% From 2023," December 31, 2024.



At the same time, the Navahine agreement mandates that HDOT complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded.⁴ With a majority of these projects located near schools, the legislature must enhance the SRTS program.

In summary, the state must prioritize the safety of people walking, rolling, biking, and using transit by investing in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. If the State expands the photo red light imaging detector system, the revenue collected must be used to support the SRTS Program. HB1231 is an important step to improve pedestrian safety in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Loor".

Lauren Loor
Healthy Eating + Active Living Statewide Program Manager

⁴ State of Hawai'i Climate Commission, "Transportation Projects," 2025.
<https://climate.hawaii.gov/grants-to-projects-bridge/transportation-projects/>.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS & JUDICIARY
Tuesday, April 1, 2025 — 10:00 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1231 HD 1 SD 1, Relating to Traffic Safety.

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports HB 1231 HD 1 SD 1 and offers an amendment. This bill prohibits the use of facial recognition software in the operation of any photo red light imaging detector systems; increases vehicle weight taxes to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund; clarifies the citations and summons procedures for the Automated Speed Enforcement Detector Systems Program; authorizes automated speed enforcement systems to be implemented along a road or highway by the State or counties within two hundred feet of a school zone identified by the safe routes to school advisory committee; authorizes the State Highway Safety and Modernization Council to recommend twenty-five dangerous intersections for photo red light imaging systems; authorizes the Safe Routes to School Advisory Council to recommend twenty-five dangerous school zones for automated speed enforcement systems; and, appropriates funds out of the State Highway Fund for deposit into and out of the Automated Speed Enforcement Systems Program Special Fund for fiscal year 2025-2026.

Although current transportation planning and decision-making have provided important safe routes to school projects and have added facilities through Complete Streets approaches, many schools remain less accessible for keiki walking or rolling to school. The lack of complete, safe and comfortable bike and pedestrian networks puts keiki at risk, especially among growing safety concerns in these areas. An analysis of Hawai'i EMS calls found that pedestrian and bicycling injuries to children are most likely to occur during the hours they are traveling to and from school.¹ Overall, walking and biking in Hawai'i have gotten progressively more dangerous in the last 20 years, and we are now ranked the 12th most dangerous state to walk and bike.²

¹ <https://www.hiphi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SRTS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

² <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i

Other states have made firm commitments to protect children’s school trips. For example, Colorado dedicates more than \$2.5 million per year in both infrastructure and programmatic monies. These projects range from physical infrastructure improvements like new sidewalks, lighting and trails, to softer solutions like walking school buses, maps and trip trackers to encourage healthier active living. The more we can support affordable options for keiki to get to school and protect them when they are walking and rolling, the better off our communities will be.

The Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee’s Annual Report to the Legislature (December 2024)³ outlines several critical findings regarding school transportation and safe routes to school in Hawai‘i. National research shows that these programs can significantly increase walking and biking to school, with participation rising 18-37 percent, while simultaneously reducing pedestrian injuries in school zones by 44-75 percent. The need for these programs is widespread, as approximately 77 percent of Hawai‘i residents live within one mile of a school. Furthermore, a preliminary analysis has already identified more than \$800 million in SRTS infrastructure needs across the state.

The Safe Routes to School Program needs consistent funding to meet growing safety challenges. While this bill seeks to create much needed additional revenue via specific categories of the state vehicle weight tax, **we recommend amending the measure to include all State of Hawai‘i registered vehicles to be subject to a \$5 fee, as is proposed in HB 1471.** Having a universal fee versus a variable weight-based one demonstrates comprehensive and universal commitment to Safe Routes to Schools. A sustainable funding source which all registered vehicles buy into, such as the proposed fee, is critical for projects that protect our local communities and students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

³ <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 4:44:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathryn Braun	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB1231 in its current versoin.

Increasing pedestrian safety is extremely important due to the rising traffic fatalities in Hawai'i and these fatalities highlight an urgent need to improve pedestrian facilities to promote safety and accessibility for all. By investing in safer streets, resources can be shifted from punitive laws that blame pedestrians for poor road design to proven safety solutions and infrastructure. By implementing leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrians are given a 3-7 second head start when crossing the street, which reduces pedestrian fatalities at intersections by 60%. By increasing funding for Safe Routes to School projects, keiki will be able to be active and safe while they walk, roll, or bike to school.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 8:15:40 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mike Golojuch, Sr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1231. Please pass this bill.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 10:16:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) encourages more keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school, leading to increased physical activity, reduced traffic congestion around schools, improved air quality, and a significant decrease in pedestrian injuries among students. This ultimately improves overall health and well-being for children and the community at large.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/28/2025 5:25:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Reeser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Committee Members on Judiciary and Ways and Means,

I strongly support this measure to improve pedestrian safety in our communities. In 2024, pedestrian fatalities rose by 61% compared to the previous year. Alarmingly, just 2% of Honolulu’s streets account for 60% of pedestrian fatalities and 42% of injuries. Instead of penalizing people for walking on unsafe streets—with jaywalking fines ranging from \$100 to \$150, often exceeding penalties for speeding—we must prioritize targeted infrastructure improvements that save lives.

I urge you to consider proven solutions to make our streets safer for everyone, such as investing in Safe Routes to School, leading pedestrian intervals, and other low-cost, effective solutions. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Cheryl Reeser
Makawao, Hawai‘i

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 8:51:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kendall Zukeran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senate Committees on Ways and Means and Judiciary,

I am writing in support for **HB1231 HD1 SD1**, relating to traffic and pedestrian safety in our communities. In 2024, there were 102 traffic fatalities and pedestrian deaths rose by 61% compared to the previous year. Alarmingly, just 2% of Honolulu’s streets account for 60% of pedestrian fatalities and 42% of injuries. Implementing this bill will increase safety in areas where our vulnerable keiki are walking or biking into school, provide much needed funding for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, and identify twenty-five dangerous school zones in the state for automated speed enforcement systems.

There is an urgent need to implement proven solutions to make our streets safer for everyone, such as investing in Safe Routes to School and leading pedestrian intervals. The SRTS program encourages more keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects within a one-mile radius of schools. This leads to increased physical activity, reduced traffic congestion around schools, improved air quality, and a significant decrease in pedestrian injuries among students. However, the SRTS is severely underfunded despite its importance. Leading pedestrian intervals reduces pedestrian fatalities at intersections by providing walkers a 3–7 second head start before vehicles get a green light, improving their visibility and reinforcing their right of way.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Mahalo,

Kendall Zukeran

Traffic Fatalities Up 10% from 2023. (2023). [Hawai‘i.gov](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/traffic-fatalities-up-10-from-2023/).
<https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/traffic-fatalities-up-10-from-2023/>

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 6:30:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support. Thank you.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2025 8:46:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Kiefer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure to improve pedestrian safety in our communities. In 2024, pedestrian fatalities rose by 61% compared to the previous year. Alarming, just 2% of Honolulu’s streets account for 60% of pedestrian fatalities and 42% of injuries. Instead of penalizing people for walking on unsafe streets—with jaywalking fines ranging from \$100 to \$150, often exceeding penalties for speeding—we must prioritize targeted infrastructure improvements that save lives.

I urge you to consider proven solutions to make our streets safer for everyone, such as investing in Safe Routes to School, leading pedestrian intervals, and other low-cost, effective solutions. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Daniel C. Smith
1961 Aamaka Pl.
Pearl City, HI 96782
dancsmith@rocketmail.com 808-462-8346

March 30, 2025

The Senate
Committee on Ways Means
Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii

Re: Hearing on HB1231 SD1, April 1, 2025 at 10:00 am

Aloha Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Committee Members:

I support HB1231 SD1. There are two elementary schools in Pearl City that are on or near busy intersections warranting red light and speeding detector cameras. Please pass the bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel C. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Daniel C. Smith
Pearl City

Testimony in Support for HB1231 - Relating to Transportation
Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM) and Committee on the Judiciary (JDC)
Tuesday, April 1st, 2025

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the WAM/JDC committees,
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **SUPPORT for HB1231 HD1 SD1**, which would increase the vehicle weight taxes for certain vehicles and deposit that revenue into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund. The measure would also create a number of regulations regarding the use of photo red light imaging systems and automated speed enforcement.

Safe Routes to School Program

There is an urgent need to improve the safety of vulnerable roadway users in Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, there were 102 traffic fatalities statewide and a staggering 42% of those fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists.¹ Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 49% of pedestrian fatalities on O'ahu occurred on state-owned roadways.² Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries are also growing. For example, the average annual number of statewide pedestrian fatalities rose by 26 percent during the 2014–2018 time period, when compared to the 2009–2013 time period.³

The SRTS program encourages keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects within a one-mile radius of public schools. Despite the importance of this program, it is severely underfunded. The current dedicated annual revenue source for the SRTS program are traffic violation surcharges. At the same time the *Navahine* agreement mandates that Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded.⁴ Implementing the state's share of bike facilities on O'ahu alone will cost \$168 million.⁵

With a majority of these projects located near schools, it's critical that the SRTS program funding be enhanced. Generating this funding through an increased state vehicle registration tax on larger, more dangerous vehicles has multiple safety benefits. In addition to generating funding for pedestrian safety projects, it also aims to reduce the prevalence of large, dangerous vehicles on the road.

¹ HDOT, "Traffic Fatalities Up 10% From 2023," December 31, 2024.

² CCH-DTS, "O'ahu Vision Zero Action Plan," 2024.

³ State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, "State of Hawai'i Traffic Fatalities," 2022.

⁴ State of Hawai'i Climate Commission, "Transportation Projects," 2025. <https://climate.hawaii.gov/grants-to-projects-bridge/transportation-projects/>.

⁵ City & County of Honolulu, Department of Transportation Services, "O'ahu Bike Plan Update," December 2019. https://www8.honolulu.gov/dts/wpcontent/uploads/sites/45/2024/04/TED-Final_2019_Oahu_Bike_Plan_Update.pdf

In the U.S., proliferation of larger vehicles has significantly increased over recent decades. Oversized vehicles (pickups, SUVs, and minivans) now make up over 75% of all cars sold in the U.S.⁶ People hit by heavy vehicles—weighing more than 4,000 pounds — are two to three times more likely to die than people hit by smaller cars, a major issue in the context of increasing pedestrian fatalities.⁷ The increased hood height also makes it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians, especially children. A recent study from the University of Hawai'i found that a 10 cm increase in a vehicle's front-end height is associated with a 22% increase in pedestrian fatality risk.⁸

Red Light Cameras and Automated Enforcement

The 2023 Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment for Hawai'i noted that 57% of pedestrian crashes happen at intersections. This highlights the need to increase compliance with traffic signals and reduce speeding and at these locations. Automated cameras have been found to reduce speeding and crash-related injuries, while yielding cost savings.⁹ They have been found to reduce racial- and gender-based disparities in traffic stops.¹⁰ However, automated enforcement also pose due-process and privacy concerns.¹¹ To address these concerns, the Vera Institute of Justice developed a set of recommendations included in their 2021 *Non-Police Responses to Traffic Safety*¹² policy brief. These recommendations are provided below:

- Transferring automated camera operations to non-police agencies.
- Banning the use of facial recognition software.
- Requiring oversight boards to monitor the volume and type of traffic citations these tools generate and how they impact communities.

Mahalo for considering this important measure.

Molly Mamaril
Kaimukī, O'ahu resident

⁶ Henry, Jim, "Light Trucks Now Outselling Cars 3-to-1," Forbes, January 3, 2022. <https://www.forbes.com/wheels/news/light-trucks-now-outselling-cars/>.

⁷ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "New car assessment program," 2015.

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2015/12/16/2015-31323/new-car-assessment-program>.

⁸ Justin Tyndall, "The effect of front-end vehicle height on pedestrian death risk," Economics of Transportation, Volume 37, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecotra.2024.100342>

⁹ Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), "Speed and Red Light Cameras," 2021. <https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/speed%20and%20red%20light%20cameras>; Shin, Kangwon, et al., "Evaluation of the Scottsdale Loop 101 Automated Speed Enforcement Demonstration Program, Accident Analysis & Prevention," Accident Analysis & Prevention 41, no. 3, 393-403, 2009; and Libby J. Thomas, Raghavan Srinivasan, Lawrence E. Decina et al., "Safety Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement Programs: Critical Review of International Literature," Transportation Research Record 2078, no. 1, 117-126, 2008.

¹⁰ Sarah Marx Quintanar, "Man vs. Machine: An Investigation of Speeding Ticket Disparities Based on Gender and Race," Journal of Applied Economics 20, no. 1, 1-28, 2017. <https://perma.cc/9X3E-6TEX>.

¹¹ Caroline J. Rodier, Susan Shaheen, and Ellen Cavanaugh, "Automated Speed Enforcement in the U.S.: A Review of the Literature on Benefits and Barriers to Implementation," Paper Submitted to the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, July, 2007. <https://perma.cc/VYW7-5PCU>.

¹² Vera Institute of Justice, "Investing in Evidence-Based Alternatives to Policing: Non-Police Responses to Traffic Safety," August, 2021. <https://vera-institute.files.svdcn.com/production/downloads/publications/alternatives-to-policing-traffic-enforcement-fact-sheet.pdf>.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 8:02:55 AM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katie Folio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I am writing in strong support of this measure to improve pedestrian safety across our communities. The alarming rise in pedestrian fatalities—a 61% increase in just the past year—makes it clear that urgent action is needed. Even more concerning, a small fraction of Honolulu’s streets (just 2%) account for the majority of pedestrian deaths and injuries.

Instead of penalizing people for walking on unsafe streets—with jaywalking fines that often exceed penalties for speeding—we should focus on infrastructure changes that prevent these tragedies. Proven, cost-effective solutions such as Safe Routes to School programs, leading pedestrian intervals, and targeted safety improvements can save lives and make our streets safer for everyone.

I urge you to prioritize these evidence-based strategies and ensure that our roadways are designed with pedestrians in mind.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Katie Folio

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 1:40:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill from a moral and legal standpoint. Before this bill, I was concerned about a person's habitus corpus rights to red light cameras and privacy concerns about cameras recording people in public and who would have access to that footage.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 1:08:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tasman Kekai Mattox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/29/2025 12:37:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jessie L Gonsalves	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fully support this bill. Need safe transport for keiki!

HB-1231-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2025 4:07:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/1/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the WAM and JDC committees,

My name is Will Caron and I am from Kahalu‘u. I urge the senate WAM/JDC committees to pass HB1231, which would provide much needed funding for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and create guidelines for use of red-light cameras and automated speed enforcement.

There is an urgent need to improve roadway safety as each year there are over 100 roadway fatalities, with hundreds more seriously injured. In 2024, 42% of roadway fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists. The SRTS program addresses this issue by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects near public schools.

Using a vehicle weight tax to fund SRTS is also the most equitable mechanism to do so. The recent shift to massive, oversized trucks and SUVs for the average consumer has raised serious safety concerns, both for vulnerable pedestrians like kupuna and keiki, as well as for other drivers in more traditionally-sized vehicles. These safety issues have to do with the amount of force with which these vehicles can impact during collisions (which is directly tied to not just speed, but also weight), as well as the mismatch between these vehicles and smaller ones during collisions.

Normally, cars are meant to crumple in a similar way during collisions to absorb the impact. Recent collisions between oversized trucks and SUVs and smaller, traditional vehicles show that the smaller vehicles are crushed beneath the oversized ones due to their extreme front-end height, turning collisions that should have been minor ones into lethal tragedies.

These oversized vehicles also put an increased wear and tear on our streets and infrastructure, the cost of which to address we as a whole community are expected to shoulder. Taxing these heavy, dangerous vehicles at a higher rate and using the funds to make our streets safer for all of us is one of the most fair propositions I have seen in nearly a decade of testifying on policy at the legislature.

I highly encourage you to pass this bill and make sure to include the vehicle weight tax to fund SRTS.

For more on the dangers and pitfalls of these oversized vehicles, I highly recommend committee members check out the video "[These Stupid Trucks are Literally Killing Us](#)".

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.