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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
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April 1, 2025
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

H.B. 235, 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. 235, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, which requires the safe routes to school advisory committee to develop and prioritize no less than three safe routes to school projects serving schools on Kamehameha Highway.

HDOT supports increasing safety for students biking and walking to school.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Testimony in Support for HB235 - Relating to Traffic Safety
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 HB235**, which would require the Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) Advisory Committee to develop and prioritize no less than three SRTS projects serving schools on Kamehameha Highway.

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. The need for SRTS projects is widespread, as approximately 77% of Hawai'i residents live within one-mile of a school. While it's important to implement SRTS throughout the state, we believe it is important to set requirements for particularly dangerous roadways, such as Kamehameha Highway. We hope that this measure will inspire similar efforts along other dangerous corridors.

In summary, with the state's pressing cost of living challenges, including transportation costs, as well as our climate and energy crises, it is vital that the state prioritize funding to improve the safety of people walking, rolling, biking, and using transit, as well as make those choices more desirable by improving pedestrian infrastructure. HB235 is an important step to improve pedestrian safety in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Abbey Seitz

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Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

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.



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Senate Committee on Ways and Means & Judiciary

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

HB235 HD1 SD1
Relating to Traffic Safety

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

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB235 HD1 SD1** which requires the Safe Routes to Schools Advisory Committee to develop and prioritize no less than three safe routes to schools projects serving schools on Kamehameha Highway.

This bill would help us achieve the goal of reducing traffic related deaths and serious injuries to zero by 2045. Traffic fatalities increased ten percent between 2023 and 2024 in Hawaii. The OahuMPO supports the expansion of the Safe Routes to Schools program in areas that have demonstrated need.

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.

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

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

From: Chevelle Davis, MPH - Director of Early Childhood & Health Policy
Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks!

Subject: Measure H.B. No. 235, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 – Relating to Traffic Safety

Hearing: Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at 10:00 AM, Conference Room 211

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha e Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of H.B. No. 235, H.D. 1, S.D. 1**, which requires the Safe Routes to Schools Advisory Committee to develop and prioritize no less than three safe routes to schools projects serving schools along Kamehameha Highway.

Hawai'i Children's Action Network Speaks! is committed to advocating for the health, well-being, and safety of all keiki in Hawai'i. We believe that keiki should be able to travel to school safely, regardless of their socioeconomic background or the neighborhood in which they live. Safe routes to schools are essential for reducing the risks that keiki face when walking or biking to school, and this bill would ensure that keiki living in areas along Kamehameha Highway, one of our state's busiest and most heavily trafficked corridors, are given the infrastructure and resources they need to travel to school safely.

Kamehameha Highway, which spans across various communities and serves several schools, is a vital transportation route. However, it is also a roadway that poses significant safety challenges for students, especially those who walk or bike to school. These challenges are compounded by high traffic volume, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and a lack of adequate crossings in certain areas. Keiki who live in neighborhoods adjacent to Kamehameha Highway often face hazardous conditions when attempting to walk or bike to school.

This bill represents a crucial step toward mitigating these dangers. By mandating that the Safe Routes to Schools Advisory Committee prioritize safe routes along Kamehameha Highway, this bill would directly benefit keiki who are at the greatest risk of injury and harm due to insufficient

infrastructure. It would also help reduce traffic congestion around schools, promote active transportation, and encourage healthier, more sustainable modes of commuting for our keiki.

Furthermore, prioritizing safe routes to schools along Kamehameha Highway would have long-term positive impacts on both the safety and health of students and the broader community. Safe, accessible routes encourage keiki to walk or bike to school, promoting physical activity and reducing dependence on motor vehicles. As we know, physical activity is crucial to the health and development of keiki, and walking or biking to school is a simple and effective way to incorporate exercise into their daily routine.

In addition to improving physical health, creating safe routes to schools also strengthens the social fabric of our communities. It fosters a sense of connection and encourages keiki to become more engaged in their neighborhoods, while also reducing the overall carbon footprint of school transportation.

For these reasons, HCAN Speaks! strongly supports this bill and urges the committees to pass it. We believe it will have a meaningful and lasting impact on the safety and well-being of keiki living along Kamehameha Highway. We also encourage the committees to work closely with local communities, schools, and transportation experts to ensure that the development of safe routes to schools addresses the specific needs and challenges of each area.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this critical measure.