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

March 13, 2025
9:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 430

S.B. 344, S.D. 1
RELATING TO HIGHWAY SAFETY

House Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation **supports S.B. 344, S.D. 1**, which requires persons under the age of 16 to wear a helmet while riding a skateboard. Clarifies that the Act does not infringe on county ordinances prohibiting skateboards on streets and roadways.

According to the Hawaii Department of Health, from 2019 through 2023, there were 11 serious skateboard injuries on our roadways, 2 of which were under the age of 17 and neither of them were wearing helmets.

According to the National Library of Medicine, wearing a helmet while skateboarding reduces the risk of head injuries by up to 88 percent.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

March 11, 2025

Chair Darius Kila
House Transportation Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: SB 344_SD 1 (Rhoads), Helmet Requirements
Position: Support

Dear Chair Kila,

AAA Hawaii is pleased to support SB 344_SD1 (Rhoads), which would require anyone under age 16 to wear a helmet when operating a skateboard on public streets, roadways, bikeways, and any other public properties. If enacted, this bill would align helmet requirements for skateboarding with bicycling, which also mandates helmet use of riders under age 16.

Skateboarding is a fun but risky sport. It requires a high level of balance on a small, unstable platform, meaning even slight disruptions or uneven terrain can easily cause a loss of balance and result in a fall. Skateboarding injuries account for thousands of injuries each year, most involving children. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 230,000 people with skateboarding-related injuries received emergency treatment at hospitals in 2022 alone. Of those injuries, more than 3 in 10 involved children under the age of 15.

Studies show non-helmeted skateboarders have a 60% greater risk of sustaining an injury than helmeted skateboarders. This means head trauma are the most common type of skateboarding injury, even though wearing a helmet significantly reduces the risk of fatalities and severe head injuries. Accordingly, an increasing number of states are mandating helmet use for minors on streets and other public properties such as skateparks.

AAA Hawaii was founded in 1915 in Honolulu and is a leader in motorist services and a strong advocate for traffic safety. With over 170,000 members in Hawaii and 60 million nationwide, service to and the safety of our members, other motorists, and all road users is our founding and continuing purpose. Helmets alone cannot prevent traffic safety collisions, but they can act as the last line of defense for in preventing serious trauma. From seat belts to helmets, all road users need to stay ready for the dangers around them. We share your effort to improve road safety and appreciate the objective of SB 344. Accordingly, AAA Hawaii supports SB 344_SD1 as amended.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marianne Kim
Senior Public Policy Specialist



Testimony in Support of SB344 SD1 Relating to Highway Safety

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Lisa Dau, RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator
Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition (KIPC)

Rep. Darius Kila, Chair, Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition (KIPC), I am writing to express our strong support for SB344 SD1, which requires all skateboard users under sixteen to wear helmets while riding. KIPC believes this measure is critical for ensuring the safety of young skateboarders and preventing serious head injuries.

Skateboarding is a popular activity among young people, but it also carries significant risks. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), wearing a helmet can reduce the risk of severe head injuries by as much as 85%. Young riders, due to their developing motor skills and risk awareness, are especially vulnerable to falls and collisions. Requiring helmet use would help instill safe habits and greatly reduce preventable injuries.

In addition, traumatic brain injuries impose a significant burden on families and the healthcare system. Emergency treatments and long-term rehabilitation for head injuries can be expensive, making prevention the most effective solution. Many states already have laws requiring bicycle helmets for minors, so it is only logical to extend similar safety measures to skateboarding.

Organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Safety Council strongly advocate for helmet use in action sports. Additionally, personal testimonies from injured skateboarders and their families highlight the devastating consequences of not wearing a helmet. By enacting this law, we can save lives, reduce medical costs, and promote responsible recreation.

KIPC respectfully urges you to support SB344 SD1 and take necessary action to protect our youth. Thank you for your time and dedication to public safety.

Sincerely,
Lisa Dau, RN, MBA, BSN, CPSTI
KIPC, Injury Prevention Coordinator

The Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition's (KIPC) mission is to prevent and reduce injuries to children in Hawaii. <https://kipchawaii.org/>

SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 5:59:16 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/13/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose

SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:02:40 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/13/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoe Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose

SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 7:16:04 AM

Testimony for TRN on 3/13/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rae Gee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Rep. Kila and Committee Members,

I am a community member and Neighborhood Board Memeber speaking on my personal comments and believe in Highway Safety relating to the use of skateboards for mobility. I believe that alterate users of mobility devices should be protected and should wear a helmet and **supports** this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment.

Rae Gee, Nuuanu

SB-344-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 5:04:15 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/13/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.