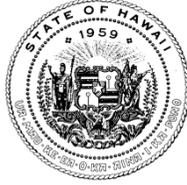


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
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Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

February 21, 2025
10:20 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 16

S.B. 971, S.D. 1
RELATING TO TRAFFIC

Senate Committees on Judiciary

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports S.B. 971, S.D. 1**, which provides that if a law enforcement officer lawfully stops a motor vehicle and the operator is cited for driving without a valid license, the officer shall not permit the operator to resume the use of the motor vehicle. Requires the motor vehicle to be moved by a licensed driver or towed at the owner's expense. Provides that the cited operator is responsible for arranging the operator's transportation from the scene of the stop.

The HDOT supports this effort to remove unlicensed drivers from our roadways to reduce motor vehicle crashes and fatalities.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SHOPO



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS

Robert Cavaco
State Board President

" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

Term of Office
1-2022 to 12-2025

February 19, 2025

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SB 971 SD1 – Relating to Traffic**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers ("SHOPO") and write to you on behalf of our Union in strong opposition to SB 971 SD1, which proposes significant changes to the handling of unlicensed drivers by law enforcement officers. While we recognize the intent of this bill to enhance public safety, we believe that as currently drafted, the bill poses several challenges that could adversely affect law enforcement operations and officer safety.

As you know, our county police departments are experiencing a critical staffing shortage. The requirement for officers to ensure that a vehicle is moved by a licensed driver or towed at the owner's expense places an undue operational burden on law enforcement. Officers are already tasked with numerous responsibilities during traffic stops, and adding the obligation to arrange for vehicle removal without discretion will most certainly detract from their primary duties of ensuring public safety and enforcing the law.

In addition, because it is common for one tow wagon to work a large area, wait times for tow trucks to respond to accidents average about thirty minutes. Thus, the bill's provisions would prolong traffic stops, increasing the time officers spend on the roadside, thereby elevating the risk of accidents or confrontations.

In conclusion, while SHOPO supports efforts to improve road safety, we believe that SB No. 971 SD1, in its current form, presents significant challenges that could hinder law enforcement operations and compromise officer safety. We urge the legislature to consider alternative approaches that balance public safety with practical enforcement measures.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,
ROBERT CAVACO
SHOPO President

RC: ja

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Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Judiciary

**02/21/25 10:20 AM
CR 016 & Videoconference**

**SB 971 SD1
Relating to Traffic**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB 971 SD1** which provides that if a law enforcement officer lawfully stops a motor vehicle and the operator is cited for driving without a valid license, the officer shall not permit the operator to resume the use of the motor vehicle, requires the motor vehicle to be moved by a licensed driver or towed at the owner's expense, and provides that the cited operator is responsible for arranging the operator's transportation from the scene of the stop.

The State of Hawaii one some of the [highest rates of fatal car crashes involving an unlicensed driver](#) in the nation, with nearly [one-fifth of all fatal crashes](#) involving an unlicensed driver. OahuMPO supports the effort to remove unlicensed drivers from our roadways to reduce motor vehicle crashes and fatalities.

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.



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Osa Tui, Jr.
President

Logan Okita
Vice President

Cheney Kaku
Secretary-Treasurer

Ann Mahi
Executive Director

TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Item: **SB 971 HD 1 - RELATING TO TRAFFIC**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **Friday, February 21, 2025, 10:20 am, Room 308**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in strong support of SB 971 HD 1 which provides that if a law enforcement officer lawfully stops a motor vehicle and the operator is cited for driving without a valid license, the officer shall not permit the operator to resume the use of the motor vehicle. The bill requires the motor vehicle to be moved by a licensed driver or towed at the owner's expense and provides that the cited operator is responsible for arranging the operator's transportation from the scene of the stop.

Our educator members asked us to support this bill in honor of the memory of McKinley High School student Sara Yara, who was killed by a car driven by a repeat traffic offender, while walking to school. While we know that no piece of legislation can undo such a tragedy, we believe that this bill is important and can prevent further community heartache.

All students should be safe walking to school, and all pedestrians should feel safe crossing our streets. The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill in memory of Sara Yara and in honor of the families, educators, and students who loved her.

SB-971-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2025 12:05:35 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/21/2025 10:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruth Love	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill. It makes sense for the vehicle to be driven away by a licensed driver the car owner knows or having the vehicle towed at the owners expense.

Perhaps there could be a rotation established, in advance, of available towing companies for officers to call.

Thank you

Mrs Ruth Love