The Judiciary, State of Hawaii

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
The Honorable Shan S. Tsutsui, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

by
Walter M. Ozawa
Deputy Administrative Director of the Courts

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 2159, Relating to Traffic Abstract Fee.

Purpose: Increases the fee for a traffic abstract from $7 to $10 and increases the amount of the fee deposited into the general fund from $5 to $8.

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary strongly supports this bill, which is part of the Judiciary=s legislative package. This bill would increase the traffic abstract fee by $3 which would be paid into the general fund.

Since 1996, the Judiciary charges $7 for a certified traffic abstract. Five dollars ($5) is deposited into the general fund and $2 is deposited into the Judiciary Computer System Special Fund. From 1982 to 1994, the traffic abstract fee was $2. In 1994, the fee was increased to $5. The current request to increase the traffic abstract fee by $3 for a total of $10 is reasonable and would not place an undue burden on individuals, insurance companies and businesses who request the traffic abstract.

In other states around the country a certified traffic abstract ranges from Free to $26. States specifically in the Pacific region (Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada,

parts of Idaho) and Alaska, have ranges for a traffic abstract as low as $3 (Oregon) for a certified court record to $10 (Washington and Alaska) for a certified traffic abstract. The $3 increase requested by the Judiciary would put Hawaii on par with states like Washington, Alaska and New Hampshire to name a few and lower than states like Idaho ($26), Nevada ($11) and Texas ($20) to name a few.

Based on abstract statistics for the first half of Fiscal Year 2010, it is expected that about 500,000 traffic abstracts will be created in Fiscal Year 2010 which will generate $2.5 million into the state general fund. With an increase in the traffic abstract fee of $3 as proposed by this bill, an additional $1.5 million could be added to the general fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2159.