

# **HB 1153**

## **RELATING TO VETERANS**

Exempts qualifying totally and permanently disabled veterans from paying the State motor vehicle registration fee. Requires the office of veterans services to report the number of qualifying veterans to the legislature and department of taxation. Applies to motor vehicle registration occurring on or after September 1, 2015.

PSM/TRA, WAM

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1153, RELATING TO VETERANS  
PRESENTATION TO THE

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY  
AFFAIRS

AND

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

BY

MR. RONALD P. HAN  
DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE OF VETERANS SERVICES

March 19, 2015

Chairs Espero and Nishihara; Vice Chairs Baker and Harimoto and Committee Members:

I'm Ron Han, Director of the State Office of Veterans Services (OVS). I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of the concepts in House Bill 1153.

This measure would exempt certain total and permanently disabled veterans from paying the State motor vehicle registration fee. Veterans who qualify must be a resident of Hawaii and be a 100% disabled veteran as determined by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and in receipt of disability retirement pay.

These service connected 100% disabled Veterans served valiantly in uniform in support and in sacrifice for our country. The freedoms we enjoy today have been paved by their dedicated and honored service. This is a small token of our appreciation for their heralded duty.

We defer to the agency with direct responsibility for implementation.

The OVS supports the concepts and intent expressed in this measure as long as its implementation does not impact or replace the priorities set forth in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Hawaii's Veterans and their families.

# TAXBILLSERVICE

126 Queen Street, Suite 304

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

**SUBJECT:** MOTOR VEHICLE, Exempt motor vehicle registration for disabled veterans

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 343; HB 1153 (Identical)

**INTRODUCED BY:** SB by Gabbard, Espero, Inouye, Shimabukuro and 3 Democrats; HB by Aquino, Cullen, Har, Johanson, LoPresti, Takumi, Yamane, Yamashita and 1 Democrat

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** Adds a new section to HRS chapter 249 to provide that any totally and permanently disabled veteran who is: (1) a resident of Hawaii; (2) other than dishonorably discharged from the U.S. uniformed armed forces; (3) determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to have a service-connected 100% disability rating for compensation or a service-connected disability rating of 100%; (4) determined by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as having an annual income of not more than \_\_\_\_\_; and (5) in receipt of disability retirement pay from any branch of the uniformed armed forces, shall not be required to pay any state motor vehicle registration fees provided the exemption shall not extend to vehicles used for commercial purposes, nor to more than one vehicle of the disabled veteran.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Upon approval; applicable to motor vehicle registrations occurring on or after September 1, 2015

**STAFF COMMENTS:** This measure proposes to exempt one noncommercial motor vehicle owned by disabled veterans who are residents of the state from the state motor vehicle registration fee. The legislature by Act 141, SLH 2008, exempted from the motor vehicle weight taxes, one noncommercial motor vehicle owned by members of the national guard, reserves, active duty armed services, including the coast guard, who are residents of Hawaii.

The motor vehicle weight tax and registration fees are user charges designed to recover the cost of construction and maintenance of Hawaii's highway system. It should be remembered that all motorists use the state highways and should, therefore, lend a hand in paying for good and safe roads. Note well, that any exemption granted to a select group of users requires that the lost revenues be made up by those who must continue to pay. Motorists who will have to pick up the additional costs created by this proposed exemption should hold those who would propose such an exemption responsible for raising their taxes.

Exemptions based solely on physical condition or age have no place in the tax law and represent poor tax policy. So while the exemption would provide relief to a disabled veteran, a single mom making minimum wage, barely making ends meet, must continue to pay these fees. As such, this proposal cannot be justified. Given that this proposal has been continually introduced, it is hard to imagine that lawmakers have not asked the question as to why they believe that a disabled veteran is financially incapable of paying his or her fair share to maintain the state's highways.

Digested 2/6/15

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



Testimony of  
FORD N. FUCHIGAMI  
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
JADE T. BUTAY  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWN H. SNIFFEN  
DARRELL T. YOUNG

IN REPLY REFER TO:

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 19, 2015  
2:30 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 229

**H.B. 1153  
RELATING TO VETERANS**

Senate Committee(s) on Transportation and  
Public Safety, Intergovernmental & Military Affairs

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) has **no position** on this bill, and although the DOT appreciates veterans and respectfully recognizes the merits to reward their sacrifices for duty, honor and country any proposed decrease would have a negative impact on the health of the State Highway Fund.

This exemption for the state motor vehicle registration fee will reduce the revenues deposited into the State Highway Fund, which is a major source of revenue deposited into the State Highway Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2015 5:12 PM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Cc:** mjgolo@email.phoenix.edu  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1153 on Mar 19, 2015 14:30PM

**HB1153**

Submitted on: 3/16/2015

Testimony for PSM/TRA on Mar 19, 2015 14:30PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Mike Golojuch	Veterans Advisory Board	Support	No

Comments: The Advisory Board to the Office of Veterans Services strongly supports the exemption for qualifying totally and permanently disabled veterans from paying the State motor vehicle registration fee. Mike Golojuch, Chair Advisory Board

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS**  
Headquarters: Department of State of Hawaii  
438 Hobron Lane, Suite 407  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

March 13, 2015

**Testimony in Support of HOUSE BILL 1153  
Relating to Veterans Before the  
Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
and the  
Senate Committee on Transportation  
Hearing On Thursday, March 19, 2015, 2:30 P.M.  
In Conference Room 229**

Sen. Espero, Sen. Baker, Sen. Nishihara, Sen. Harimoto and Committee Members,

The Department of Hawaii, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW) represents 3,800 members in 20 Posts located throughout the State of Hawaii. VFW is a federally chartered national association of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen who have served the United States of America in wars, campaigns, and expeditions on foreign soil or in hostile waters.

H.B. 1153, Exempts qualifying totally and permanently disabled veterans from paying the State motor vehicle registration fee. Requires the office of veterans services to report the number of qualifying veterans to the legislature and department of taxation. Applies to motor vehicle registration occurring on or after September 1, 2015.

VFW Hawaii concurs with the findings of the House Committee on Veterans, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts: "that it is important to assist disabled United States veterans who have served valiantly and sacrificed to defend our country. Most permanently and totally disabled veterans are unable to work, and your Committee believes that a limited exemption from vehicle registration fees would provide financial relief to deserving disabled veterans as a small token of thanks for their dedication and service."

VFW Hawaii members would appreciate your favorable consideration of this bill because it would give those veterans a tangible benefit in recognition of their sacrifice for citizens of our state and country.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B 1153.

*Lawrence M.G. Enomoto*

Lawrence M.G. Enomoto  
VFW Hawaii State Legislative Liaison

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2015 4:46 PM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Cc:** jdavis37@my.hpu.edu  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1153 on Mar 19, 2015 14:30PM

**HB1153**

Submitted on: 3/17/2015

Testimony for PSM/TRA on Mar 19, 2015 14:30PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jerrell Davis	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am currently a permanently disabled Army veteran. Due to the amount that I receive for disability I struggle to pay my car registration. This bill will help me financially and mentally.

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2015 7:24 AM  
**To:** PSMTestimony  
**Cc:** wusstig@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1153 on Mar 19, 2015 14:30PM\*

**HB1153**

Submitted on: 3/18/2015

Testimony for PSM/TRA on Mar 19, 2015 14:30PM in Conference Room 229

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kenny Wusstig	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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