TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023





ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 36, RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTIONS.

BEFORE THE: SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY					
DATE:	Friday, January 27, 2023	TIME: 10:00 a.m.			
LOCATION:	State Capitol, Room 016				
TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or Amy Murakami, Deputy Attorney General					

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) supports the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.

This bill addresses the Hawaii Supreme Court's decision in <u>State v. Obrero</u>, 151 Hawaii 472, 517 P.3d 755 (2022). The Court held that section 801-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), did not permit the initiation of felony criminal charges via preliminary hearing. Initiating criminal charges via preliminary hearings is necessary for an efficient and effective criminal justice system. By amending section 801-1, HRS, this bill would allow a felony criminal prosecution to be initated by complaint following a preliminary hearing as permitted by section 10 of article I of the Hawaii Constitution.

The Department has concerns regarding proposed subsection (b) because it places a restriction on the prosecution's ability to seek charges following a "no bill" by a grand jury panel or a "no probable cause" finding by a judge after a preliminary hearing. The proposed subsection essentially limits the prosecution to two attempts to charge a case unless additional material evidence is presented, a limitation on prosecutorial discretion that the Department does not believe is necessary. Nevertheless, the Department recognizes that this provision has greater impact on the county prosecutors, and defers to the county prosecutors' position on this provision.

We respectfully ask the Committee to pass this bill.

STATE OF HAWAI'I OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

Testimony of the Office of the Public Defender, State of Hawai'i to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

January 27, 2023

S.B. No. 36: RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTIONS

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The Office of the Public Defender supports in part and opposes in part S.B. No. 36, which prohibits multiple attempts to initiate a felony prosecution for the same offense, either through the same initial charging method or an alternative method, or in different forums, except in certain circumstances.

Repeated attempts at initiating prosecution of the same felony offense by presenting the same evidence to both a grand jury and judge, or returning to the same forum, is not contemplated by the Hawai'i Constitution. Whether by presenting the allegations to a different grand jury after a previous grand jury did not find sufficient evidence for an indictment, or by using both the grand jury and preliminary hearing processes after the first forum rejected the evidence, the prosecution is precluded from having multiple opportunities to present the same evidence in hopes of achieving a different outcome. Therefore, the Office of the Public Defender supports the following provision in the bill:

(b) If initiation of a felony prosecution is sought via indictment by a grand jury or a finding of probable cause after a preliminary hearing, and is denied, initiation of a felony for the same prosecution for the same offense using the same or an available alternative charging method or by seeking a different judge or jury shall not be permitted unless:

(1) Additional material evidence is presented[.]

The aforementioned provision is consistent with the concurring and dissenting opinion by the Associate Justice Paula Nakayama in <u>State v. Obrero</u>, 151 Hawai'i 472, 517 P.3d 755 (2022). Justice Nakayama, however, did not suggest or intimate a "good cause" exception or a "grand jury/grand jury counsel misconduct" exception.

Good Cause Exception

The Office of the Public Defender opposes the "good cause" exception; specifically, the OPD opposes the added language, "A court, upon application of the prosecutor, finds good cause to submit a subsequent presentation, provided that this paragraph shall not apply if prosecutors have previously sought a subsequent presentation for good cause."

First, concurrence in <u>State v. Obrero</u> clearly provides, "[T]he State may return to the grand jury to seek an indictment of Obrero, but prosecutors *must present new evidence* that was not presented to the prior panel that had not returned a true bill to obtain a constitutionally valid indictment." (Emphasis added). Codifying an alternative method to present the same evidence to a different grand jury (presuming that the alleged "good cause" is other than new evidence) will invite another constitutional challenge; criminal defense attorneys will appeal any case in which the prosecutor was able to present a case a second time to a grand jury (or a district/family court judge) based on a finding of good cause.

Second, the requirement for "new evidence" or for "additional material evidence" does two very important things:

This requires the prosecution to ensure that they have all necessary evidence and witnesses before charging someone with a crime and proceeding to a grand jury or preliminary hearing. In other words, the prosecutions should not move forward unless and until they are certain that they can establish probable cause. And if there is no finding of probable cause, then the prosecution should be precluded from moving forward unless they can establish to the court that additional material evidence will be presented which was not known at the time of the first presentation of evidence.

This precludes the prosecution from holding back on evidence and requires them to present everything they know. In other words, this will preclude them from sand bagging if they think a certain judge or grand jury panel, from past experience, might not be open to their arguments.

Third, a procedural problem is created when a prosecutor, after a true bill is refused by a grand jury, files an application to the court to seek another attempt to present evidence to another grand jury based on good cause. It should be noted that neither the accused nor defense counsel are allowed to be present at grand jury proceedings. *Indeed, the accused is not even aware that an indictment is being* *sought*; the accused becomes aware only when an arrest warrant is issued. Furthermore, in the vast majority of cases, the accused do not have counsel. Therefore, if a true bill is refused and the prosecution files an *ex parte* motion to seek a second opportunity to appear before a grand jury or hold a preliminary hearing, *there will be no party in opposition to argue* whether good cause exists. Only the prosecution will be allowed to present its argument to the judge.

When only one party (here, the prosecution) is only allowed to present argument on an issue (here, whether good cause exists), our adversarial system is severely undermined. The adversarial system is premised on the well-tested principle that truth – as well as fairness – is best discovered by powerful statements on both sides of the question." <u>State v. Fields</u>, 115 Hawai'i 503, 529, 168 P.3d 955, 981 (2007) (quoting <u>Penson v. Ohio</u>, 488 U.S. 75, 84, 109 S.Ct. 346, 102 L.Ed.2d 300 (1988)). Therefore, in order to prevent the deterioration of our justice system, the prosecution should not be allowed to appear before a judge without opposition and argue on the issue of whether good cause has been established to submit a subsequent presentation to a grand jury or to a district court judge.

Fourth, the standard of "good cause" is simply too broad. What is good cause? The "good cause" standard will raise more questions and provide no guidance for a court examining an *ex parte* application to present the same evidence (again, presuming that the alleged "good cause" is something other than new evidence). What is a "substantial reason" affording a "legal excuse" in this context? Is it the same thing as "unanticipated circumstances?" What would be an unanticipated circumstance in this situation? What is a "substantial reason affording a legal excuse" in this context? Will a judge be able to find good cause simply based on the seriousness of the charges? Will good cause include the prosecutor's failure to present material evidence, which the prosecutor was in possession of (or was aware of), to the grand jury or to a judge at a preliminary hearing?

A grand jury is free to return a no bill for any reason just as a petit jury is free to acquit. Should this provision be included in this bill over our objections, this standard will certainly be litigated in the appellate courts.

If <u>State v. Obrero</u> stands for anything, it stands for the integrity of the charging process, and for there to be more than a rubber stamp in the finding of probable cause. It has been speculated that the <u>Obrero</u> grand jury heard evidence that they believed that the defendant acted in self-defense, and so chose not to return a true bill. This is exactly how a grand jury of community members, standing between the government and a fellow citizen, should have acted. Thus, the grand jury system

worked in this case. However, it is clear to see the breakdown in that system, when the "same" evidence was presented to a single member of the judiciary and probable cause was found. Therefore, if the legislature's intent is to maintain the integrity to the system, then making it easier for the prosecution to forum shop or to hide behind a vague term like "good cause" is not the answer.

Grand Jury and/or Grand Jury Counsel Misconduct

The Office of the Public Defender further opposes the "misconduct" exception; specifically, the OPD opposes the added language, "The initial hearing was before a grand jury and there is a subsequent finding of grand jury misconduct or grand jury counsel misconduct."

Allowing representation of the same evidence after a "finding" of grand jury misconduct turns the entire premise of juror misconduct on its head. If the jury returns a no bill, then no prosecution has been initiated based on the evidence presented. The analogous situation is the finding of not guilty by a petit jury. If the prosecutor found juror misconduct, Double Jeopardy prevents the State from bringing a new trial.

We realize that Double Jeopardy does not apply at the grand jury phase, but Due Process does, and that is the basis for the defendant to raise grand juror misconduct. The State is not entitled to this kind of recourse. In fact, the Grand Jury is free to decline charges for any reason and for reasons that are confidential and secret. This exception would allow *the prosecutors, in the name of investigating misconduct, to pry into the deliberation phase and have courts to second-guess the finding of no bill*; all without constitutional authority.

Juror misconduct is an issue that can only be brought by the defense after a finding of a true bill or a guilty verdict because when the defendant raises misconduct, it is a violation of the defendant's constitutional rights. The State is not entitled to this recourse. While the court must concern itself with the defendant's constitutionally protected rights, the State has no such recourse and the system is, and will remain, asymmetrical.

There is also a practical problem. A "finding" of juror misconduct implies that it is made by the court. (Certainly, the prosecutor cannot determine misconduct on its own). Thus, the prosecution will need to file an *ex parte* motion to determine juror misconduct, and a hearing will be held with only the prosecutor present. If witnesses are called to testify at the hearing, the accused will not be able to conduct

cross-examination or present witnesses/evidence. The accused is not even a defendant at this point. When will the accused be informed about these proceedings? There are no rules for any of these proceedings to determine misconduct. It could incentivize prosecutors to investigate and even harass grand jurors who do not return a true bill.

Furthermore, we are faced with the same procedural problem as in the "good cause" exception. When a prosecutor files a motion for a second attempt to initiate a felony prosecution based on alleged juror misconduct or grand jury counsel misconduct, the accused is not only not present at the judicial hearing to determine whether misconduct occurred (since the accused is not even made aware that grand jury proceedings were ever initiated), but also, the accused is not entitled to be represented counsel. Again, the prosecutor alone will be arguing before a judge. The adversarial system of justice will be undermined when only one party (here, the prosecution) is allowed to present argument on the issue of whether misconduct occurred to establish to submit a subsequent presentation to a grand jury or to a district court judge.

Proposed amendment

The Office of the Public Defender further suggests the bill include language, which mandates that the prosecutor inform the defendant of prior attempts to seek a true bill or a finding of probable cause on the same matter:

(c) If initiation of a felony prosecution was sought via an indictment by a grand jury or a-finding of probable cause after a preliminary hearing, and is denied, and a subsequent initiation of a felony prosecution via an indictment by a grand jury of a finding of probable cause after a preliminary hearing was successful, the prosecutor is required to inform the defendant of any prior attempt to seek a true bill or a finding of probable cause on the same matter.

Due process requires that the accused should be informed that a prior attempt to initiate prosecution of the same felony offense so that the accused may be able to challenge any assertion that a subsequent initiation of a felony prosecution meets the requirements set forth in this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

ALII PLACE 1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813 PHONE: (808) 768-7400 • FAX: (808) 768-7515



THOMAS J. BRADY FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICARY Thirty-Second State Legislature Regular Session of 2023 State of Hawai`i

January 27, 2023

RE: S.B. 36; RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTION.

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu ("Department"), submits the following testimony regarding S.B. 36, in <u>support, with comments</u>.

The purpose of this bill is to address a Hawaii Supreme Court decision issued on September 8, 2022 (*State v. Obrero¹*), in which the majority held that—despite 40 years of established law—charging felony cases via complaint and preliminary hearing is no longer allowed. This decision was based a single statute, section 801-1 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS")—a statute that remained "unchanged in its current form at least since 1905"²—because that one statute was (we believe inadvertently) never amended when all other relevant statutes were amended in the 1980's. Indeed, in 1982, Article I, Section 10 of the Hawaii State Constitution was amended by the Legislature and voters, to expressly allow charging via complaint and preliminary hearings…and in subsequent years, multiple HRS statutes in other chapters were amended to comport with charging felonies via complaint/preliminary hearings. In 1983, the Hawaii Supreme Court itself established court rules setting out the requirements for charging felonies via complaint and preliminary hearings.

As a result of the majority opinion in *Obrero*, hundreds of felony charges statewide—in which judges had already found probable cause on which to proceed with the case—instantly

content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576dis.pdf.

STEVEN S. ALM PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

 ¹ State v. Obrero, 517 P.3d 755 (September 8, 2022). Majority opinion available online at https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576.pdf; concurring opinion at https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576condop.pdf; dissenting opinion at https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576dis.pdf. Last accessed January 26, 2023.
² State v. Obrero (September 9, 2022) (Recktenwald, dissenting). Available online at https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576dis.pdf.

became technically insufficient. That landslide of cases, combined with a grand jury schedule unprepared to hear all of these cases, and great uncertainty regarding the constitutionality of continuing to hold over a hundred of these individuals in jail without legally sufficient charges, created dire confusion and turmoil for prosecutors, defense attorneys, defendants, victims, judges, police, sheriffs, and indeed everyone in our criminal justice system who is involved with these felony cases.

Even today, the Department continues to deal with a significant backlog of "pre-Obrero" cases that have yet to go before the grand jury for charging, while we balance the simultaneous need to send new incoming felony cases to grand jury as well. Without preliminary hearings as a valid charging method, <u>many victims and other witnesses have been forced to testify twice within a</u> <u>matter of weeks, sometimes very soon after a traumatic event</u>; prosecutors and staff have had to duplicate efforts by presenting the same case twice, before different bodies; and courts have had to provide double the courtroom time and staffing to hear those cases twice. The extreme inefficiency of this system continues to affect each county negatively, in different ways, and indeed points back to the very reasons why the Hawaii State Constitution, and all-but-one (overlooked) statute, was amended back in the 1980's, to allow for charging via preliminary hearings.

Given this urgent need to rectify the current situation in our courts and in our laws, S.B. 36 would address this issue by amending HRS §801-1 (*see* p.1, ln.14, through p.2, ln.2), and we believe this would indeed allow preliminary hearings, once again, as a valid charging method. That said, the Department also believes that this could be done—perhaps more cleanly and concisely— by repealing HRS §801-1 altogether, as proposed by bills in our 2023 legislative package (S.B. 225 and H.B. 124). Notably, all three opinions issued by the Hawaii Supreme Court justices in *Obrero* acknowledged that HRS §801-1 could be effectively repealed by the Legislature.³

In addition to amending subsection-(a) of HRS §801-1, S.B. 36 goes on to create a new subsection-(b) (*see* SB 36, p. 4, lns. 3-17), which would limit prosecutors' discretion on when they could seek felony charges via grand jury or preliminary hearing, after a prior grand jury or preliminary hearing judge returned a finding of no probable cause. First, the Department would emphasize that this issue was never raised in the majority opinion nor dissenting opinion, and thus appears to be a "non-issue" for the majority of Hawaii's Supreme Court justices; they simply do not believe that the current procedures on this matter are unconstitutional.

Admittedly, there have been times—though very rare—when each county prosecutor has had to do this, but it is used sparingly, judiciously, and only in the most serious cases that almost invariably involve gravely impacted victims (or surviving family members). Sometimes this effort by prosecutors does lead to felony charges—as has been seen in recent years—and that can and sometimes does result in conviction *beyond a reasonable doubt* (as determined by a 12-member jury, after considering *all* admissible evidence and arguments presented by *both* the state and defense). Due to some of the particular procedures that govern the way grand jury and preliminary

³ See State v. Obrero, 517 P.3d 755 (September 8, 2022); **majority opinion** at p. 20: "The 1982 amendment of article I, section 10, then, made the repeal of HRS § 801-1 possible, but did not effectuate that repeal...", available online at <u>https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576.pdf</u>; **concurring opinion** at p. 1: "For the reasons discussed in the Chief Justice's Dissent, I agree that the 1982 amendment to article I, section 10 of the Hawai'i Constitution invalidated Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) § 801-1. I join wholeheartedly in his Dissent." available online at <u>https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576condop.pdf</u>; and **dissenting opinion** at p. 11: "To give any force at all to the will of the voters and legislature that enacted the [1982 constitutional] amendment, we must hold that it repealed HRS § 801-1 by implication." available online at <u>https://www.courts.state.hi.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SCAP-21-0000576dis.pdf</u>. Last accessed January 26, 2023.

hearings are conducted, as well as the *preliminary nature* of these proceedings, it is certainly possible for a single grand jury or judge—that has not heard any or all of the legal arguments, has not heard any or all of the expert testimony, and most likely has not heard from all potential witnesses—to "get it wrong." The Department does note that sometimes this effort by prosecutors leads to a second finding of no probable cause, but that only strengthens our belief that the existing procedure works.

Be that as it may, the Department does understand that it is within the Legislature's purview to create new laws, and appreciates that the language of S.B. 36 does not entirely prohibit the safeguard system described above. If limitations to the existing system are codified, the provisions contained in S.B. 36 appear to be well-reasoned, narrow enough to prevent abuse, yet broad enough to account for the infinite and yet-unimaginable situations that could arise in the future.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu <u>supports</u> the passage of S.B. 36. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

KELDEN B.A. WALTJEN PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

STEPHEN L. FRYE FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



655 KILAUEA AVENUE HILO, HAWAI'I 96720 PH: (808) 961-0466 FAX: (808) 961-8908

74-675 KEALAKEHE PARKWAY KAILUA-KONA, HAWAI'I 96740 PH: (808) 322-2552 FAX: (808) 322-6584

64-1067 MAMALAHOA HIGHWAY, C-3 KAMUELA, HAWAI'I 96743 PH: (808) 887-3017 FAX: (808) 887-3016

OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT WITH COMMENTS OF SENATE BILL 36

A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTIONS

> COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Friday, January 27, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. Via Videoconference State Capitol Conference Room 016 415 South Beretania Street

Honorable Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary. The County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony with comments in support of Senate Bill 36.

S.B. 36 was drafted with the intent to reinstate prosecutors' authority to initiate felony prosecutions by way of complaint and preliminary hearing. It is also establishes limitations on the initiation of a subsequent felony prosecution, based on the same evidence, after a prior denial of a probable cause finding.

On September 8, 2022, the Hawai'i Supreme Court released its opinion in *State v*. *Obrero*, which determined that Hawaii Revised Statutes § 801-1 precludes prosecutors from initiating felony prosecutions via complaint and preliminary hearing. This decision contradicts established criminal law procedures which have been in place in Hawai'i for the past forty years and impacts the most serious offenses including murder, kidnapping, robbery, domestic violence, drug trafficking, and sexual assault. The Court also raised concerns regarding the initiation of a subsequent felony prosecution by alternative means following the denial of a probable cause finding.

Since the *Obrero* decision, the four county prosecutors have worked together, proposed several different legislative solutions, and even requested a special legislative session in 2022 to repeal or amend § 801-1 given the urgency of this matter. We have also worked collaboratively with the Judiciary in order to secure more opportunities for grand jury sessions per month across the State.

S.B. 36 is consistent with the intent of the Hawai'i Constitution, restores criminal procedure practices that have been in place for the last 40 years, supports and protects victims

and witnesses of crime, affords the criminally accused an opportunity to participate in the initiation of felony criminal proceedings, and provides law enforcement with the resources necessary to ensure public safety.

The County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney remains committed to pursuing justice with integrity and commitment. For the foregoing reasons, the, County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney supports the passage of S.B. 36 with comments. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



3990 Ka'ana Street, Suite 210, Līhu'e, Hawai'i 96766 808-241-1888 ~ FAX 808-241-1758 Victim/Witness Program 808-241-1898 or 800-668-5734

January 26, 2023

RE: S.B. 36; RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTIONS

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for the County of Kaua'i submits the following testimony in support of S.B. 36.

On September 8, 2022, the Hawaii Supreme Court issued the *State v. Obrero* decision, which held that charging felonies using a complaint and preliminary hearing was no longer an option. Instead, we are required to also obtain a Grand Jury Indictment within two weeks after the preliminary hearing is held. (Charging certain serious offenses now require issuance of a Grand Jury Indictment.) When *Obrero* was decided, on Kaua'i, our Grand Jury convened only one time per month and sometimes the gap between the convenings stretched to six weeks.

The four County Prosecutors jointly requested a special legislative session to either repeal or amend Hawaii Revised Statute Section 801-1. Each of us also worked with our Circuit Court judges to request additional Grand Jury sessions. We were fortunate that we were able to accommodate all our serious cases on this expanded Grand Jury calendar. However, we prefer to return to having the option of proceeding via complaint and preliminary hearing in felony cases. This will avoid victims, lay witnesses, and police officers having to testify at the preliminary hearing and within two weeks, having to testify again before the Grand Jury, just to establish sufficient probable cause to thereafter proceed to trial.

This bill also addresses the concerns articulated by the Justices in the *Obrero* opinion regarding charging the same felony case using different methods. It prevents that from happening absent specific, articulated circumstances. The need to recharge a felony case either in a different forum or again in the same forum may occur on occasion. S.B. 36 clearly specifies when the Prosecution can seek to recharge.

An Equal Opportunity Employer

To summarize, Senate Bill 36 would allow us to return to charging cases the way our Office has been for more than 40 years. For that reason, the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for the County of Kaua'i respectfully submits the above comments supporting the passage of S.B. 36. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR. Mayor

ANDREW H. MARTIN Acting Prosecuting Attorney

SHELLY C. MIYASHIRO First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney





DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

COUNTY OF MAUI 150 SOUTH HIGH STREET WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAI'I 96793 PHONE (808) 270-7777 • FAX (808) 270-7625

TESTIMONY ON S.B. 36 RELATING TO THE INITIATION OF FELONY PROSECUTIONS

January 26, 2023

The Honorable Karl Rhoads Chair The Honorable Mike Gabbard Vice Chair and Members of the Committee on Judiciary

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui respectfully submits the following comments concerning S.B. 36, Relating to the Initiation of Felony Prosecutions. Specifically, we would like to express our <u>support</u> for: 1) conforming the Hawai'i Revised Statutes to article I, Section 10 of the Hawai'i State Constitution, 2) clarifying the three methods for initiating felony prosecutions, and 3) clarifying the requirements for multiple attempts to initiate prosecution of the same felony offense.

On September 8, 2022, the Hawaii Supreme Court issued the <u>State v. Obrero</u> decision, which interpreted Hawai`i Revised Statutes § 801-1 to require that felony prosecutions be initiated only by indictment or information, as opposed to the additional method of a preliminary hearing authorized by the 1982 amendment to article I, Section 10 of the Hawai`i State Constitution. Although we relied upon the 1982 Constitutional amendment for 40 years to initiate prosecution of serious felony offenses via preliminary hearing, the <u>Obrero</u> decision required us to obtain a Grand Jury indictment within a relatively short time frame in order to properly charge certain serious offenses. This created additional demands upon not only our resources, but also the Judiciary and the citizens serving on the grand jury itself.

To adapt to the <u>Obrero</u> decision, the four County Prosecutors worked with the Judiciary to request additional Grand Jury sessions and jointly requested a special legislative session to either repeal or amend Hawaii Revised Statutes § 801-1. We were fortunate that we were able to

accommodate all our serious cases using this expanded Grand Jury calendar. However, having the option to initiate serious felony prosecutions via preliminary hearing will reduce the number of Grand Jury sessions necessary to keep up with the number of incoming felony matters.

S.B. 36 also addresses the concerns articulated by the Hawai'i Supreme Court in the <u>Obrero</u> decision regarding multiple attempts at charging the same felony case using different methods. While the need to re-charge a felony case does occur on occasion, S.B. 36 sets forth specific pre-requisites that need to be met before doing so.

For these reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui <u>supports</u> the passage of S.B. 36. Please feel free to contact our office at (808) 270-7777 if you have any questions or inquiries.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.

<u>SB-36</u> Submitted on: 1/23/2023 7:55:33 PM Testimony for JDC on 1/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This person should be charged every time he committee and illegal Act there should be no exception!!