

Chair Chris Lee

Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye

Senate Committee on Transportation & Culture & the Arts

Thursday, March 23, 2023

3:01 PM

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SCR7/SR5 URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO IMPROVE ACCESS OF THEBUS IN OAHU'S RURAL COMMUNITIES

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation & Culture & the Arts,

My name is Jun Shin. I am a recent graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, a member of the Hawai'i State Youth Commission, and a bus rider. I am in **STRONG SUPPORT** of **SCR7/SR5**, Urging the City and County of Honolulu to Improve Access of TheBus in Oahu's Rural Communities.

I love TheBus and have used it for most, if not all of my transportation needs since I was a Freshman at the UH Mānoa. As I transition to being a full-time worker, it will most likely remain that way. For many, many working people and students who cannot afford to buy and maintain a car or don't have anybody in their networks that has a car, the public bus system remains a relatively affordable and accessible form of transportation to go to work, school, shopping, picking up kids, having fun, etc. It's environmentally friendly too, especially since our buses have started to go electric.

The reason I say it is relatively affordable and accessible is the concern I have that under our current system, costs of using TheBus will increase like it did when there was a fare increase in 2022. That's only going to make it tougher on the pockets of working people and even students, especially as our family/personal budgets grow further constrained with the cost of living crisis. Decision makers should follow other municipalities/states and work to implement free public transportation.

Accessibility wise, whether it's due to staffing shortages or other issues, TheBus's operations have changed since the pandemic. Even living and spending time in parts of Honolulu where buses are supposed to be running frequently, it's apparent that the public bus system is struggling. Buses are constantly late and I don't know if this is just my personal perception, but it doesn't seem like there are enough buses to meet demand, and that results in buses filling up to the brim at times. If it's a noticeable and inconvenient problem here in town, it's no doubt an even more serious issue in rural communities that are not getting enough resources as is. Please **PASS Senate Concurrent Resolution 7/Senate Resolution 5** out of your committee and address this serious transportation issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

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