



STATE OF HAWAII
ILIMA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
91-884 FORT WEAVER ROAD
EWA BEACH, HI 96706

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Shayne Greenland, the Principal at Ilima Intermediate School, and I have been involved with Weed and Seed Hawai'i for the past decade. During my tenure as Vice Principal at James Campbell High School, the Weed and Seed Program significantly aided our efforts in addressing various issues related to drugs, alcohol, and conflicts at the Ewa Beach Community Park and our local community. They collaborated closely with school administrators to mediate potentially harmful situations involving students and families, stemming from altercations on campus and within the community. They are also involved in conducting assemblies associated with: Drugs & Alcohol Prevention, Vaping, Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Human (Sex) Trafficking of students. Additionally, they actively participated in constructive initiatives such as summer programs like the Junior Golf Program, cooking sessions at JCHS, and community clean-up events.

Weed and Seed have been instrumental in maintaining the safety of our school campus. Their prompt response to trespassing incidents, coupled with their familiarity with individuals involved, enabled them to resolve situations swiftly and peacefully. The value of their contributions cannot be overstated, and it would be a disservice to our community to not continue their invaluable support.

Based on our shared history, mission, and ongoing programs, I STRONGLY OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

1. It misrepresents the purposes, value, and effectiveness of the program.
2. It alleges without evidence that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and leads to the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods.
3. It solely emphasizes the law enforcement aspect of the Weed and Seed strategy, overlooking the equally crucial "seeding" component involving prevention, intervention programs, and community engagement. This is the value that they continue to bring to our Ewa Beach Schools.

These are just a few instances highlighting why I remain a steadfast supporter and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i. I urge you to give careful consideration to my perspective.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shayne Greenland', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Shayne Greenland - Principal

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Elson Barba and I have been involved with Weed and Seed for the past 2 years as a school administrator and as a resident in the Ewa and Ewa Beach community since its inception in 2003.

Based on their history, mission, and current programs, I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. Note that it offers no evidence.
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or “weeding” component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important “seeding” component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.

I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact “seeding” activities have had on the Ewa and Ewa Beach community in the following ways:

- 1) Their active involvement in our school has proved to be able to mediate through tough situations between students and their families.
- 2) Through these mediation sessions, weed and seed members are able to offer and provide other support and resources for families who are experiencing difficulty.
- 3) Their presence at school events provides a non-threatening bridge; oftentimes engaging in positive interactions with our families and community members.
- 4) Their ability to help us be proactive rather than reactive has helped to minimize and reduce the potential for various threats on and off campus.

These are just a few examples of why I continue to support and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i. **I urge you to take my comments into consideration.**

Sincerely,



Elson Barba, Vice Principal - Ilima Intermediate School
911133 Pohahawai Place
Ewa Beach, Hawaii 96706

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Kelli Buenconsejo and I have been involved with Weed and Seed for many years as a Public Health Nurse and more recently as a Waipahu Steering Committee member. Each site is led by a Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership to implement the site's strategies.

Based on our history, mission, and current programs, I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. Note that it offers no evidence.
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or "weeding" component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important "seeding" component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.

I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact "seeding" activities have had on the Waipahu community in the following ways:

- Weed and Seed Hawai'i knows that crime prevention must start at an early age and thus, have created youth mentoring programs that work with Elementary, Intermediate and High school students to combat and prevent substance abuse, truancy, and gang involvement.
- Through organized graffiti paint outs and beautification projects, Weed and Seed Hawai'i has given residents the opportunity to clean up and care for their neighborhoods.
- Weed and Seed Hawai'i has assisted in creating neighborhood security watches in the most at-risk neighborhoods and have empowered the residents to report illegal activities promptly.

- Weed and Seed Hawai'i was instrumental in hosting the first meeting in Waipahu to discuss how the community can support the state and federal government concerning prison re-entry into the community.
- Weed and Seed Hawai'i worked with UH Manoa to host the first discussions regarding the over representation of Polynesian youth in the Juvenile Justice System. These early discussions lead to the creation of the Civil Citation program implemented in Kalihi to divert first time offenders into culturally based services.

These are just a few examples of why I continue to support and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i and **I urge you to consider my comments.**

Sincerely,

Kelli L. Buenconsejo, RN PHN
State of Hawaii
Department of Health
Public Health Nursing Branch
Leeward Oahu Nursing Office
94-275 Mokuola Street Rm 101
Waipahu, HI 96797



The Senate
Ka 'Aha Kenekoa

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

April 1, 2024

TESTIMONY COMMENTING ON HCR 217 AND HR 197
*REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ESTABLISH A TASK
FORCE ON ETHNICAL POLICING TO EVALUATE THE EFFICACY AND IMPACT OF
WEED AND SEED PROGRAMS IN THE STATE*

Before the House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs
Tuesday, April 2, 2024 – 2:00 p.m.

Conference Room 325, via Videoconference

Submitted by Senator Carol Fukunaga (Senate District 11)
and Senator Karl Rhoads (Senate District 13)

During our collective years as state legislators (2006-present), and as county-state legislators representing the Downtown-Chinatown community (2012-2022), we have experienced first-hand the strong community benefits that Weed & Seed initiatives have brought to Honolulu's Downtown-Chinatown neighborhood.

After 2019-2022, when COVID-pandemic shutdowns shuttered many businesses, and drug-dealing, panhandling, petty crime and assaults in Downtown-Chinatown multiplied exponentially, a majority of neighbors applauded new Prosecuting Attorney Alm's proposed renewal of a Weed & Seed initiative at the county level. For those businesses and condo residents who had participated actively in the earlier Weed & Seed effort, they knew how much the reduction of illegal activities by more than 50% contributed in a major way towards Chinatown's resurgence in the early 2000's.

At the same time, we appreciate the importance of coordinated city/state and federal agency efforts to pursue "Weed" (investigation, prosecution and enforcement against illegal actions in Weed & Seed zones) and community-initiated efforts to "Seed" the same neighborhoods in cleaning-up, rebuilding and revitalizing blighted communities. We look forward to working with law enforcement, Judiciary, business and community partners in making today's Weed & Seed efforts even more impressive.

Thank you for considering our comments on this measure.

Senator Carol Fukunaga
Senate District 11

Senator Karl Rhoads
Senate District 13

January 19, 2024

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair
Representative Kyle Yamashita, House Finance Chair

RE: State GIA - Weed and Seed Hawaii, Inc.

My name is Gayleen Balais and I am a Recreation Director with the Project Ho'omana Program and Waipahu Complex Supervisor under the City and County of Honolulu Department of Parks and Recreation, which provides services to the youth in partnership with Weed and Seed Hawai'i and the HPD District 3 CPT Officers for 21 years.

I support Weed and Seed Hawai'i because they have been an integral part in making the Waipahu community a better and safer community for our youth, adult and seniors to live. They have afforded our community residents with various resources to better enrich their lives and daily living. They understand the "needs" of the community and thus, has created a very strong working relationship/partnership with various community groups, businesses and organizations. Project Ho'omana has been very fortunate to have been working with Weed and Seed Hawai'i for 21 years. Their support and resources to my program have been innumerable and beneficial to all individuals in our program. My partnership with Weed and Seed Hawai'i has been a blessing to myself on a professional and personal level. Not only do I work in the Waipahu community, I am also a proud resident of the Waipahu community. Through their efforts, I have seen many positive changes and am very happy that the Waipahu community has been provided with such a rich community resource like Weed and Seed Hawai'i.

Weed and Seed is an important community resource which needs to be continued. Your continued support of this important initiative will ensure that community leaders and partners continue to build a strong network of committed citizens that will work toward preventing crime and growing strong, healthy communities.

I urge you to support Weed and Seed Hawaii by supporting their State GIA application.

Sincerely,



Gayleen Balais
Recreation Director, Dept. of Parks & Recreation
94-230 Paiwa Street, Waipahu HI 96797

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Hercules Huihui and I have been involved with Weed and Seed since its inception in 2000. I am a long time Waipahu resident and current chair of the Waipahu Steering Committee. Each site is led by a Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership to implement the site's strategies.

Based on our history, mission, and current programs, I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. Note that it offers no evidence.
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or "weeding" component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important "seeding" component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.

I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact the "weeding" and seeding" activities have had on the Waipahu community in the following ways:

- When a major drug dealer moved in across the street from where I lived, I worked with the Honolulu Police Department through Weed and Seed Hawai'i to take him down. It took 3 years of surveillance but in the end, all his drug houses were shut down across O'ahu.
- Being a part of Weed and Seed Hawai'i has given me the opportunity to serve my community as a caretaker for the people and especially my keiki. That is why I am grateful to Weed and Seed Hawai'i for inviting me to help with the Keiki and Cops Christmas shopping event every December. Weed and Seed Hawai'i takes needy children and pairs them up with a local hero or helper who serves as a positive role model. The keiki are treated to breakfast and given the opportunity to shop for gifts.
- As the konohiki of the Pupuu area, I am also called upon to speak on behalf of the residents and support positive programs like the Gardening Project at Waipahu Intermediate School and the Pupuuole Bike Path Cleanup. Projects like these give our

keiki the opportunity to learn the importance of food sustainability, to give back to their community and teaches them how to be servant leaders.

I can cite many examples of why I continue to advocate for and support Weed and Seed Hawai'i. But perhaps my biggest reason for being a part of Weed and Seed Hawai'i is because I firmly believe that it is my kuleana, my responsibility, to take care of my own neighborhood. Weed and Seed Hawai'i has given me a voice and countless learning opportunities and I am grateful to Weed and Seed Hawai'i for continuing to help us to help ourselves.

I urge you to take my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Hercules Huihui
94-335 Pupuole Street Apt. 1
Waipahu HI 96797



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS
" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

April 1, 2024

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **HR 197 – Task Force on Weed and Seed Programs**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Takayama, 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 **opposition** to HR 197. This bill seeks to urge the Department of Law Enforcement to establish a task force to evaluate the efficacy and impact of Weed and Seed programs. The resolution states that there is a need to these programs for “ethical policing,” and that evidence suggests the programs “disproportionately target marginalized communities and results in militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods.” The resolution also states that that the programs may also result in “unjustly high criminal sentences for persons who are arrested in designated Weed and Seed areas.”

As you may know, the Weed and Seed program was originally implemented in 1998 with the Honolulu Police Department as its first partner. This multiagency program requires teamwork between prosecutors, police and community members and while not perfect, is an example of people working together to make their communities safer. The “weed” function of the program, i.e., removing criminals from a particular district by police, was carried out for a few years before being discontinued for roughly twenty years. The “seed” function of the program has continued throughout and includes providing services, such as substance abuse treatment, to help people get off the streets. In approximately 2021, the “weed” aspect of the program was reactivated in Chinatown and Kalihi-Palama and then planned for Waikiki in 2022. Media reports on the revival and expansion of the program have featured numerous positive messages regarding the negative impact of the program’s long absence and its immediate results. We cannot agree more. Our residents should not feel afraid outside of their homes and this program has made a difference. Moreover, Honolulu City Prosecutor Steven Alm has represented that there are no unique penalties imposed on those arrested in connection with the program except that bail may be set higher and that these arrests provide the “quick attention” needed in the area.

Main Office & Honolulu Chapter Office
1717 Hoe Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819-3125
Tel: (808) 847-4676 "84 SHOPO"
www.shopohawaii.org Fax: (808) 841-4818

Hawaii Chapter Office
688 Kinoole Street, Room 220B
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-3877
Tel: (808) 934-8405
Fax: (808) 934-8210

Kauai Chapter Office
3176 Oihana Street, Suite 104, Lihue
Mailing Add: P. O. Box 1708
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-5708
Tel: (808) 246-8911

Maui Chapter Office
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Fax: (808) 242-9519

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Gregg Takayama, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
April 1, 2024
SHOPO Testimony Page 2
Re: HR 197 – Task Force on Weed and Seed Programs

Ironically, this resolution speaks of potential “over-policing of low-income neighborhoods.” Our county police departments are experiencing a severe staffing crisis. Our communities are begging us for *more* presence, but this legislature seems only to be interested in allocating resources to studies, reducing incentives to recruit officers, and passing new measures that make an already difficult job as a police officer even harder. The Weed and Seed program needs *more* resources, not energy lost on identifying any possible way to dismantle it. Rather than urging more “studies,” how about helping us find ways to fill the empty beats so that our neighbors can feel safer.

We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this very important issue and we hope your committee will unanimously oppose HR 197.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT “BOBBY” CAVACO
SHOPO President

RC jmo

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Rochelle Kalili and I have been involved with Weed and Seed for the past 14 years as a former resident and current Steering Committee member. Each site is led by a Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership to implement the site's strategies.

Based on our history, mission, and current programs, I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. Note that it offers no evidence.
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or "weeding" component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important "seeding" component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.

I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact "weeding" and "seeding" activities have had on the Waipahu community in the following ways:

- As a parent of 6 children and 6 grandchildren who once lived in Waipahu, my priority is the safety of my family. Unfortunately, my former home, Waipahu, had the stigma of being a bad place to live. While I acknowledge that there may still be criminal and drug issues, I also know that Waipahu is a safer place to live and work **because of Weed and Seed Hawai'i**. Through Weed and Seed Hawai'i, a team of officers has worked closely with us to address community issues. In fact, they arrested some people for prostitution near where I used to live and arrested two people for distributing crystal meth near a park where children play.
- As a parent-community facilitator at an area elementary school, I have seen the improvement in the way our students/children relate to police officers. In the past, many of our children viewed officers as aggressive people who only caused harm to their 'ohana. Through the partnerships that the Weed and Seed Hawai'i has created, **it has changed their views**. They now see police officers as people who are looking out for their best interests; people they can trust. Weed and Seed Hawai'i has educated individuals on how drugs and other negative influences ruin families and community. **Weed and Seed Hawai'i has empowered current and former residents like me to**

take back their community. We are no longer afraid to call 9-1-1 to ask for help. As the saying goes, "Ohana means no one is left behind." I believe that because of Weed and Seed Hawai'i, no one in Waipahu is left behind.

- Through their RAP youth mentoring program that takes place at the school I work at, students are educated on the laws, taught the importance of making good decisions as well as presented information on Bullying, Internet Safety, and Drug Education, to name a few.
- In addition, the Waipahu Complex Area schools have for several years worked closely with Weed and Seed Hawai'i to address safety concerns on and off campus. Weed and Seed Hawai'i has brought in presenters to educate our staff and families on Harassment, Internet Safety, Inappropriate Touching and Exposure, Dangers of Tobacco Products and E-Cigarettes, Gangs, etc. These educational opportunities help our families to make educated choices and to be aware of the challenges that our youth may be facing today.

These are just a few examples of why I continue to support and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i. **I urge you to take my comments into consideration.**

Sincerely,


Rochelle Kalili
85-203 McArthur Street
Waianae, HI 96792

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Evie Ahlo and I am a longtime Waipahu resident. I have been involved with Weed and Seed for 15 years as a volunteer and Waipahu Steering Committee member. Each site is led by a Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership to implement the site's strategies.

Based on our history, mission, and current programs, I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. Note that it offers no evidence.
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or "weeding" component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important "seeding" component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.

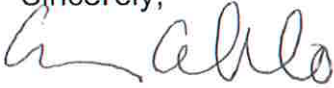
I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact "seeding" activities have had on the Waipahu community in the following ways:

- Although I have lived in Waipahu for most of my lifetime, it was Weed and Seed Hawai'i who helped to educate me on many of the challenges that exist in our community. This is one of the main reasons that I felt the need to volunteer with Weed and Seed Hawai'i. I helped with mini Kupuna Fairs providing safety information to our senior citizens. I helped with the collection of school supplies and backpacks for needy keiki.
- Through safe and drug free family events such as Celebrate Safe Communities, the Candy Crawl at Pearlridge and 'Ohana Thanksgiving Bingo Night, we can engage with families and create a positive atmosphere of learning and fun.
- While in my former position with Hawai'i's Plantation Village, Weed and Seed Hawai'i spearheaded a Fair to provide homeless persons with resources and support to get their lives back on track.

- Whenever there is a concern, Weed and Seed Hawai'i has given me an opportunity to voice my concerns, make suggestions on how to deal with the situation(s) and/or directly get involved in the organization and implementation of the event. My resource and support base has expanded with the support of Weed and Seed Hawai'i.

These are just a few examples of why I continue to support and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i and **I urge you to consider my comments.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evelyn Ahlo', written in a cursive style.

Evelyn Ahlo
94-473 Awamoi Street
Waipahu HI 96797

April 1, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair
The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair
& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
State Capitol Room 325
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Task Force on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Susan Moniz and I am a longtime Waipahu resident and have been involved with Weed and Seed for 17 years as a Waipahu Steering Committee member. Each site is led by a Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership to implement the site's strategies.

Based on our history, mission, and current programs, **I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:**

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. **Note that it offers no evidence.**
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or "weeding" component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important "seeding" component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.
- 4) It appears the proposed task force's aim is to prove the redundancy of Weed & Seed's mission by not acknowledging its "Seeding" component.

I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact "seeding" activities have had on the Waipahu community in the following ways:

- For a long time, Weed and Seed Hawai'i provided a safe space for the Safe Haven Immigrant Center to flourish. Through the immigrant center families were able to develop sewing skills which in turn, provided part-time employment for the participants.
- Through organized graffiti paint outs and beautification projects, Weed and Seed Hawai'i has given residents the opportunity to clean up and care for their neighborhoods which results in a positive and safe community.
- Weed and Seed Hawai'i created more opportunities for police officers to be visible and to mentor the youth through programs developed at the Elementary, Intermediate and High Schools.

- Through safe and drug free family events such as Celebrate Safe Communities, Community Safety Presentations and Thanksgiving Bingo Night, families can spend time together in a positive atmosphere learning, receiving education and resources and having fun.

These are just a few examples of why I continue to support and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i and **I urge you to consider my comments.**

Sincerely,

Susan Moniz

Susan Moniz
94-534 Awamoi Street
Waipahu HI 96797



McDonald's of Ewa Beach
91-919 Fort Weaver Road
Ewa Beach, Hi 96706

April 1, 2024

Chair Tarnas and Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

REGARDING HCR 217/HR197-REQUESTIG THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE ON ETHICAL POLCING TO EVALUATE THE EFFICACY AND IMPACT OF WEED AND SEED PRORAMS IN THE STATE

As a longtime resident and businessperson of Ewa Beach, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HCR217/HR197

I have been a Weed and Seed Steering Committee member since 2005.

The impact Weed and Seed has had in improving our community is priceless. Through its neighborhood restoration efforts, I have seen firsthand the decline of graffiti in the area. With law enforcement and community policing truancy has declined tremendously. The Ewa Beach community has become a clean and safe place to live and work in due to the success of Weed and Seed.

Weed and Seed is an important organizational tool and community resource whose strategy must continue. I humbly ask you to consider all the of the important initiatives we have worked on. Keeping Weed and Seed will ensure that community leaders and partners continue to build a strong network of committed citizens that will work toward preventing crime and growing strong, healthy communities.

I oppose HCR217/HR197 and find it unnecessary to create a task force. WNSH mission is clear, and its strategies have proven to be successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Quiamzon", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard Quiamzon
General Manager
McDonald's of Ewa Beach

HR-197

Submitted on: 4/1/2024 7:41:28 AM

Testimony for JHA on 4/2/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gale Mejia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 31, 2024

The Honorable Rep. David Tarnas, Chair

The Honorable Rep. Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair

& Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

State Capitol Room 325

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Members of the Committee:

RE: HCR217/HR197 Requesting the Department of Law Enforcement to Establish a Taskforce on Ethical Policing to Evaluate the Efficacy and Impact of Weed and Seed Programs in the State

Aloha,

My name is Gale Mejia and I have volunteered with Weed and Seed for the past 16 years as a Steering Committee member. Each site is led by a Steering Committee, which is responsible for providing leadership to implement the site's strategies.

Based on our history, mission, and current programs, I OPPOSE HCR217/HR197 for the following reasons:

- 1) It misrepresents the purposes, value of, and effectiveness of the program.
- 2) It claims to have evidence that suggests that this strategy disproportionately targets marginalized communities and results in the militarization or over-policing of low-income neighborhoods. Note that it offers no evidence.
- 3) It only focuses on the law enforcement or "weeding" component of the Weed and Seed strategy and fails to take into consideration the equally, if not more important "seeding" component of prevention and intervention programs and services as well as creating opportunities for the community to get involved in strengthening their community.

I have seen and experienced firsthand the positive impact "seeding" activities have had on the Waipahu community in the following ways:

- Through their RAP youth mentoring program at Waipahu and Honowai Elementary Schools, students are educated on the laws, taught the importance of making good decisions as well as presented information on Bullying, Internet Safety, and Drug Education, to name a few.

- In collaboration with Waipahu High and Intermediate Schools Law and Justice Academies, officers introduce skillsets in notetaking, problem solving, de-escalation, etc.

- Their support and coordination of beautification events engage community members, both young and old, to take pride in our community.

- Through the coordination and implementation of family-oriented events such as the Celebrate Safe Communities, Town Hall on Underage Drinking and Drug Use, etc. family members are connected to much needed resources that can strengthen their family unit.

These are just a few examples of why I continue to support and advocate for Weed and Seed Hawai'i. I urge you to take my comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Gale Mejia

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