
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that arrests are commonly
2 made at the initiation of a criminal case, but sometimes occur
3 needlessly when the issuance of a citation to appear in court
4 would have sufficed. Arrests consume a significant portion of
5 the limited resources of understaffed police departments,
6 increase the number of people held in custody before trial, and
7 contribute to overcrowding in correctional facilities. Given
8 Hawaii's high cost of living and the significant percentage of
9 families who live paycheck to paycheck, many arrestees cannot
10 afford to post bail before trial.

11 The legislature also finds that arrests are highly
12 disruptive to a person's life. Despite the fundamental
13 principle of the presumption of innocence on which the justice
14 system is built, arrests cause embarrassment and, in some cases,
15 trauma, when they occur in the presence of family members,
16 neighbors, or coworkers, or are publicized in the media.
17 Further, an arrest can significantly jeopardize the arrestee's



1 housing and employment and set into motion a chain of economic
2 and logistical hardships for the arrestee's family, especially
3 when the arrestee is the main source of household income and
4 cares for multiple dependents.

5 Additionally, in the 2018 pretrial task force
6 recommendations to the legislature, the first recommendation for
7 reducing the pretrial jail population was:

8 Reinforce that law enforcement officers have
9 discretion to issue citations, in lieu of arrest, for
10 low level offenses and broaden discretion to include
11 non-violent Class C felonies. For low-risk defendants
12 who have not demonstrated a risk of non-appearance in
13 court or a risk of recidivism, officers should issue
14 citations rather than arrest.

15 The legislature finds that this Act does not address
16 felonies and therefore only applies to misdemeanors, petty
17 misdemeanors, and violations. As such, it is not as expansive
18 as many states or the recommendation made by the task force.

19 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to reduce
20 unnecessary arrests in criminal cases by:



(1) Amending the factors under which officers may arrest and detain persons without a warrant for petty misdemeanors and violations, and requiring officers to document the justification for the arrests;

(2) Amending the circumstances under which officers may issue citations in lieu of arrest;

(3) Requiring officers to issue citations in lieu of arrest for certain petty misdemeanors and violations, unless public safety or flight risks are present or the alleged offense involves operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant or the abuse of family or household members; and

(4) Improving court appearance rates through a redesigned citation form and updated required citation information.

SECTION 2. Section 803-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§803-5 By police officer without warrant. (a) A police officer or other officer of justice, may, without warrant, arrest and detain for examination any person when the officer has probable cause to believe that ~~[such]~~ the person ~~[has]~~



1 committed any felony or misdemeanor offense, whether in the
2 officer's presence or otherwise.

3 (b) A police officer or other officer of justice, may,
4 without warrant, arrest and detain for examination any person
5 when the officer has probable cause to believe that the person
6 committed any petty misdemeanor or violation, whether in the
7 officer's presence or otherwise, and the officer is reasonably
8 satisfied that the person:

9 (1) Has not offered satisfactory evidence of the person's
10 identity;

11 (2) Will not appear in court at the time designated;

12 (3) Has an outstanding arrest warrant that would justify
13 the person's detention or gives indication that the
14 person might fail to appear in court;

15 (4) Committed an offense of such nature that there will be
16 further police contact on or about the date in
17 question, or in the immediate future;

18 (5) Must be detained to prevent bodily injury to that
19 person or another person;

20 (6) Committed the offense of operating a vehicle under the
21 influence of an intoxicant under section 291E-61; or



1 (7) Committed the offense of abuse of family or household
2 members under section 709-906.

3 (c) In any case in which an officer arrests an individual
4 for a petty misdemeanor or violation, the officer shall record
5 which of the factors under subsection (b) justified the arrest.

6 ~~[(b)]~~ (d) For purposes of this section, a police officer
7 has probable cause to make an arrest when the facts and
8 circumstances within the officer's knowledge and of which the
9 officer has reasonably trustworthy information are sufficient in
10 themselves to warrant a person of reasonable caution in the
11 belief that a crime has been or is being committed."

12 SECTION 3. Section 803-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended to read as follows:

14 **"§803-6 Arrest, how made~~[-]~~; citations in lieu of arrest.**

15 (a) At or before the time of making an arrest, the person shall
16 declare that the person is an officer of justice, if ~~[such is~~
17 ~~the case.]~~ applicable. If the person has a warrant, the person
18 ~~[should]~~ shall show it; or if the person makes the arrest
19 without warrant in any of the cases in which it is authorized by
20 law, the person ~~[should]~~ shall give the party arrested clearly
21 to understand for what cause the person undertakes to make the



1 arrest, and shall require the party arrested to submit and be
2 taken to the police station or judge. This done, the arrest is
3 complete.

4 (b) In any case in which ~~[it is lawful for]~~ a police
5 officer ~~[to arrest]~~ has probable cause to believe that a person
6 ~~[without a warrant for]~~ committed a misdemeanor, petty
7 misdemeanor, or violation, the police officer may~~[, but need~~
8 ~~not,]~~ issue a citation in lieu of the requirements of subsection
9 (a), ~~[if]~~ unless the police officer finds and is reasonably
10 satisfied that:

11 (1) The person has not offered satisfactory evidence of
12 the person's identity;

13 ~~[-(1)]~~ (2) The person will not appear in court at the time
14 designated;

15 ~~[-(2)]~~ (3) The person has ~~[no]~~ an outstanding arrest
16 ~~[warrants]~~ warrant that would justify the person's
17 detention or ~~[give]~~ gives indication that the person
18 might fail to appear in court; ~~[and]~~

19 ~~[-(3)]~~ (4) The offense is of such nature that there will be
20 ~~[no]~~ further police contact on or about the date in
21 question or in the immediate future~~[-];~~ or



1 (5) The person must be detained to prevent bodily injury
2 to that person or another person.

3 (c) In any case in which it is lawful under subsection (b)
4 for a police officer to issue a citation for a petty misdemeanor
5 or violation, the police officer shall issue a citation in lieu
6 of the requirements of subsection (a); provided that a police
7 officer need not issue a citation in lieu of the requirements of
8 subsection (a) if it is lawful for the police officer to arrest
9 the person for:

10 (1) A felony or misdemeanor offense;

11 (2) The offense of operating a vehicle under the influence
12 of an intoxicant under section 291E-61; or

13 (3) The offense of abuse of family or household members
14 under section 709-906.

15 Nothing in this subsection shall limit law enforcement
16 discretion to issue a citation pursuant to subsection (b).

17 (d) No later than July 1, 2027, the judiciary shall
18 promulgate a citation form for use by police officers that
19 includes, at a minimum, all of the information described in
20 subsection (e). To the extent possible, the citation form shall
21 be designed to:



(1) Facilitate data collection and sharing, including between law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice research institute, and any court reminder system managed by the judiciary; and

(2) Maximize the rate at which persons appear in court in response to the citation, by adhering to research and best practices on form design to improve court appearance rates.

~~[(e)]~~ (e) The citation shall contain:

(1) The name of the offender;

(2) The current address of the offender, if available;

(3) ~~[The last four digits of the offender's social security number,]~~ The offender's cell phone number and electronic mail address, if available;

(4) A description of the offender;

(5) The nature of the offense;

(6) The time and date of the offense;

(7) A notice of the time [and], date, and location for court appearance;

(8) The signature and badge number of the officer;



(9) The signature of the offender agreeing to court appearance, unless the offender refuses, or is unable to sign;

(10) Any remarks; [~~and~~]

(11) A notice directing the offender to appear at the time and place designated to stand trial for the offense indicated and a notice that failure to obey the citation may result in a fine or imprisonment, or both;

(12) Available options for citation resolution and options for persons unable to afford any fines or costs imposed; and

(13) The phone number and internet address of the court for questions or additional information relating to the court appearance;

provided that omission of any of the information listed in paragraphs (1) to [~~(11)~~] (13) or any error in the citation shall not be a ground for dismissal of a charge or for reversal of a conviction if the omission or error did not prejudice the defendant. To the extent practicable, the citation shall place



1 information described in paragraphs (7), (11), (12), and (13) at
2 the top of the citation, before other administrative fields.

3 ~~[(d)]~~ (f) Where a citation has been issued in lieu of the
4 requirements of subsection (a), the officer who issues the
5 summons or citation may subscribe to the complaint:

6 (1) Under oath administered by any police officer whose
7 name has been submitted to the prosecuting officer and
8 who has been designated by the chief of police to
9 administer the oath; or

10 (2) By declaration in accordance with the rules of court.

11 ~~[(e)]~~ (g) If a person fails to appear in answer to the
12 citation~~[+]~~, or if there is reasonable cause to believe that the
13 person will not appear, a warrant for the person's arrest may be
14 issued. A knowing failure to appear in answer to the citation
15 may be punished by a fine of ~~[not]~~ no more than \$1,000 or
16 imprisonment of ~~[not]~~ no more than thirty days, or both."

17 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that
18 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were
19 begun before its effective date.

20 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
21 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

2

INTRODUCED BY:

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JAN 28 2026



H.B. NO. 2494

Report Title:

Judiciary; Arrests; Warrantless; Citations

Description:

Establishes factors under which officers may arrest and detain persons without a warrant for petty misdemeanors and violations, and requires officers to document the justification for the arrests. Amends the circumstances under which officers may issue citations in lieu of arrest. Requires officers to issue citations in lieu of arrest for certain petty misdemeanors and violations, unless public safety or flight risks are present or the alleged offense involves operating a vehicle under the influence of an intoxicant or the abuse of family or household members. Requires the Judiciary to promulgate a standardized citation form and updates the required information for citations.

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