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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 1524, H.D. 1
RELATING TO PEDESTRIANS**

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID A. TARNAS, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: February 26, 2026
2:00 PM

Room Number: Conference Room 325
via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Judiciary, the Department of
2 Transportation, and the Counties for fiscal implications of implementation.

3 **Department Position:** The DOH provides comments on the public health impacts of House Bill
4 1524, House Draft 1 (H.B. 1524, H.D. 1), which Establishes that fines for pedestrian violations
5 under chapter 291C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, shall not exceed an unspecified amount.
6 Requires state and county agencies to revise applicable schedules of fines, rules, and
7 procedures to comply with the monetary limit.

8 **Department Testimony:** Decriminalizing pedestrian use of roads and punitive enforcement shift
9 the responsibility for safety to systemic changes in urban design and traffic management.¹ The
10 Federal Highway Administration refers to this as a “safety culture,” that considers safety for all
11 users.² Focusing on improving crosswalks, reducing vehicle speeds, and designing safer streets
12 (e.g., implementing traffic calming measures) can reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities. When
13 pedestrian roadway use is decriminalized, it can encourage municipalities to invest in safer
14 pedestrian infrastructure rather than rely on enforcement.

¹ National Association of City Transportation Officials. (2021). *Creating Safe, Multimodal Urban Transportation*

² U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. *Safety Culture*. Retrieved 1-27-25 from:
<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths/safety-culture>

1 Pedestrian access to everyday destinations is also a social justice and healthy equity
2 issue.³ The term, “jaywalking,” first appeared as a derogatory term promoted in the United
3 States by the pro-automobile lobby,⁴ contributes to racially based police stops, which aligns
4 with the overrepresentation of people of color in the criminal justice system. Hawaii has a
5 history of disproportionately policing and incarcerating Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
6 (NHPI), so decriminalizing jaywalking would address some of the racial injustices in our state. In
7 2019, NHPI were involved in over one-third of police force incidents despite making up only
8 one-fourth of the population.⁵

9 Laws that criminalize pedestrians are ineffective at producing roadway safety results
10 and accentuate places which are hostile to walking. Removing pedestrian penalties has not
11 been found to increase adverse public safety outcomes. Initial data from localities where
12 decriminalization of pedestrian roadway crossings was implemented (Virginia, Kansas City,⁶
13 Denver and California⁷) shows that there has been little to no change in the number of traffic
14 injuries and fatalities. In California, traffic fatalities decreased by 13% in 2024.⁸ In addition,
15 cities with the lowest traffic death rates (mainly in Europe) do not have “jaywalking” or
16 pedestrian road crossing laws.⁹

17 The heavy burden pedestrians carry can also be seen in the structure of traffic fines. In
18 Hawaii, fines for jaywalking range between \$100 and \$150.¹⁰ These fines are more than some
19 other driving-related traffic violations, such as speeding, which is a significant contributor to

³ Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *About Physical Activity*. 2021.

⁴ [Jaywalking - Wikipedia](#). Retrieved 3-17-25 from: [Jaywalking - Wikipedia](#).

⁵ Kawano, L. (2021, February 4). *HPD report shows police force used most on Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders*. Hawaii News Now. Retrieved January 31, 2024, from <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2021/02/05/hpd-report-shows-police-force-used-most-native-hawaiians-pacific-islanders/>

⁶ Schmitt, A. (2022, June 23). *These Communities Are Making Progress After ‘Jaywalking’ Reform*. Streetsblog USA. Retrieved January 31, 2024, from <https://usa.streetsblog.org/2022/06/23/these-u-s-communities-are-making-safety-progress-after-jaywalking-reform>

⁷ Schmitt, A. (2023, February 14). *Denver is the latest place to eliminate harmful “jaywalking” laws that are enforced unfairly*. America Walks. Retrieved January 31, 2024, from <https://americawalks.org/decriminalizing-walking-notching-more-wins/>

⁸ Keatts, A., & Fitzpatrick, A. (2025, March 7). *California pedestrian deaths decreased in the first half of 2024*. Axios; Axios San Diego. <https://www.axios.com/local/san-diego/2025/03/07/california-national-state-pedestrian-deaths-decreased>

⁹ International Federation of pedestrians. *Regulation of pedestrian priority at pedestrian crossings in the Vienna Convention/transmitted by the International Federation of Pedestrians (FIP)* 2002. Retrieved on 1-28-25 from: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/458014?ln=en&v=pdf#files>

¹⁰ Hawai'i State Department of Transportation. Frequently asked questions: what is the fine for pedestrians who jaywalk? Walk Wise Hawaii. Published 2024. Accessed February 10, 2026. <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/safe-communities/walkwisehawaii/faq>

1 traffic injuries and fatalities. For example, on Oahu, speeding (1–10 miles over the posted
2 speed limit) only results in a fine of \$62 (plus \$5/mph over).¹¹ Similarly, the fine for running a
3 red light on Oahu starts at \$97.28.¹²

4 Despite Hawaii’s favorable climate, geography, and reputation for active outdoor living,
5 only 33% of adult and 18% of high school students in Hawaii met federal guidelines for physical
6 activity.^{13,14} The design of roads that integrate active transportation options like walking,
7 bicycling, and transit is a public health concern since the safety and accessibility of a
8 community’s built environment can promote or hinder physical activity. This includes removing
9 barriers to safely and conveniently accessing active transportation options. Safe, accessible,
10 and walkable communities encourage physical activity and can promote better health
11 outcomes in communities whose populations are at less risk for serious chronic diseases and
12 conditions such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.¹⁵ Additionally, encouraging walking
13 and biking reduces reliance on motor vehicles, leading to decreased air pollution in the form of
14 vehicular exhaust and non-exhaust emissions such as tire particulate matter.

15 Active transportation, including walking, biking, and rolling, provides everyday
16 opportunities for physical activity. Adequate built environment infrastructure is critical for
17 accessibility, connectivity to essential community destinations, and safety. Removing barriers
18 to equitable access and making up for historical underinvestment that has resulted in
19 inadequate walking, biking, and mobility infrastructure are important components to
20 encourage active transportation. The DOH promotes evidence-based, equity-focused active

¹¹ Honolulu Police Department. Motor vehicle safety. Published 2024. Accessed February 10, 2026.
<https://www.honoluluupd.org/information/motor-vehicle-safety>

¹² Hawaii State Department of Transportation. HDOT Red-Light Safety Camera Program. Published 2022. Accessed February 10, 2026.
<https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2022/12/Final-RLSC-brochure.pdf>

¹³ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2023.

¹⁴ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, 2023;
https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/PhysActMeetRec/PhysActMeetRec_HS_ST.html.

¹⁵ CDC *About Physical Activity*. 2021.

1 transportation policies that improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety infrastructure especially for
2 historically under-resourced communities.

3 **Offered Amendments:** None

4 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

February 26, 2026 at 2:00PM

Conference Room 325

HB 1524 HD 1

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB 1524 HD 1**, which establishes that fines for pedestrian violations under chapter 291C, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, shall not exceed an unspecified amount, and requires state and county agencies to revise applicable schedules of fines, rules, and procedures to comply with the monetary limit.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan including support for active and public transportation, promoting an equitable transportation system, and improving air quality and protecting environmental and cultural assets.¹ Reducing the fines for pedestrian violations makes walking a less hostile form of transportation, encourages more people to walk or roll to their destination, and improves equity in transportation fines.

States and municipalities across the country are passing measures decriminalizing “jaywalking,” including the states of California and Virginia, and the cities of Denver, Kansas City, and New York City, with more likely to follow suit.² In states where these measures have been implemented and relevant data is available, there has been no significant change in pedestrian fatalities.³ In Hawaii, pedestrian fatalities continue to rise despite the enforcement of jaywalking laws.⁴

The Federal Highway Administration lists proven safety countermeasures that have shown to reduce pedestrian crashes, hospitalizations, and deaths.⁵ Some examples

¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215

² <https://americawalks.org/redefining-safety-without-penalties/>

³ <https://americawalks.org/jaywalking-reform-progress/>

⁴ https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2025/10/Fatality-Breakdown-by-Counties_Color-Coded-7.23-1-002-1.pdf

⁵ [Proven Safety Countermeasures | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

include pedestrian medians or refuges, road diets, leading pedestrian intervals, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons. In addition to passing this law, proven safety countermeasures can be implemented systemically to truly improve pedestrian safety.

Jaywalking laws create inequitable conditions on our streets. The current fine for crossing a roadway at a point away from a crosswalk starts at ranges from \$130 to \$180 plus fees. This fine is a significant financial burden for mobility-constrained residents who rely on walking due to the high cost of vehicle ownership, age, and/or mobility. The risk of citation punishes vulnerable road users and disincentivizes walking as a form of transportation. Fines for jaywalking are also disproportionately high when compared to fines for more dangerous violations such as speeding, which start at just \$62 + \$5/mph over the limit on Oahu.⁶

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

⁶ <https://www.honolulu.gov/information/motor-vehicle-safety/>



Testimony in Support for HB1524 - Relating to Pedestrians
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)
Thursday, February 26, 2026 at 2:00PM

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the JHA committee, Mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1524**, which would establish that fines for pedestrian violations under chapter 291C, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, shall not exceed an unspecified amount. This bill represents a meaningful and pragmatic step toward addressing Hawai'i's overreliance on punitive enforcement approaches that impose unnecessary financial burdens on pedestrians without improving roadway safety. We also offer suggested amendments for the committee's consideration.

Based on a report titled ["Freedom to Walk", published by Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice](#), from 2018 to 2023 there were more than 30,000 jaywalking citations issued statewide—an average of over 5,000 citations per year.¹ Hawai'i Appleseed's analysis of jaywalking citations also shows that jaywalking citations occurred were concentrated in densely populated, lower-income areas of urban Honolulu.²

On a per-capita basis, Hawai'i issues jaywalking tickets at dramatically higher rates than other states. While these citations are often justified as a safety measure, the data tell a different story: enforcement-heavy approaches have not reduced pedestrian injuries or fatalities, which continue to rise across the state.

Current jaywalking fines and fees—typically ranging from **\$130 to \$180 plus fees**—are disproportionately high relative to the nature of the offense. These fines are more than some other driving-related traffic violations, such as speeding, which is a key contributor to traffic injuries and fatalities. For example, on O'ahu, speeding (1–10 miles over the posted speed limit) only results in a fine of \$62 (plus \$5/mph over).³

Pedestrian fines fall hardest on people who walk out of necessity, including low-income residents, seniors, youth, and people with disabilities. For many, a single ticket can trigger a cascade of consequences, including referral to debt collection, damaged credit, court involvement, and barriers to employment or housing. Hawai'i Appleseed's analysis found that although more than **\$3.8 million** in

¹ Seitz, A, "Freedom to Walk: Decriminalizing Jaywalking and Shifting Investment Towards Safe, Accessible Pedestrian Infrastructure," Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, March, 2024. <https://hiappleseed.org/publications/freedom-to-walk>.

²Ibid.

³ Honolulu Police Department, "Motor Vehicle Safety," 2024, <https://www.honoluluupd.org/information/motor-vehicle-safety>

jaywalking fines were assessed during the study period, **less than one-quarter was actually collected**, suggesting that the current system is both **punitive and inefficient**.

Reducing jaywalking fines, as proposed in HB1524, would help mitigate these harms. Importantly, lower pedestrian fines reduce the risk of long-term financial and legal consequences that are disproportionate to the underlying conduct, while also decreasing administrative and judicial costs associated with uncollected debt.

HB1524 aligns with a growing national shift away from punitive pedestrian enforcement and toward a more balanced, safety-centered approach. Evidence from other jurisdictions shows that **lowering or eliminating jaywalking penalties does not lead to worse safety outcomes**, and allows public resources to be better focused on proven strategies such as safer street design, traffic calming, and accessible crossings.

Suggested Amendments

The current language of the measure does not specify the maximum fine amount for pedestrian violations. We respectfully urge JHA to **restore the original bill language capping pedestrian fines at no more than \$25 per violation**. Including a clear \$25 cap is essential to ensure the bill's intent is fully realized. Without a specified amount, the bill risks creating ambiguity that could allow pedestrian fines to remain excessively high in practice, undermining the purpose of this reform. A defined statutory cap provides transparency, consistency across counties, and meaningful relief for residents who rely on walking.

In closing, Hawai'i Appleseed urges the Legislature to recognize that excessive pedestrian fines are not a safety strategy. HB1524 offers a commonsense reform that reduces unnecessary harm, promotes fairness, and supports a broader transition toward streets that are safe and accessible for everyone.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

HB-1524-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 11:41:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Zach Goodman | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this. We have limited space on our islands and we need to start prioritizing people over cars. Cars should be regulated and fined far more heavily than pedestrians.

HB-1524-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 6:18:22 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2026 2:00:00 PM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| William Caron | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB1524, which would reduce all pedestrian fines to \$25. This bill is a critical step toward creating a more equitable and sensible enforcement system that prioritizes actual safety over punitive fines that criminalize walking.

The current fine structure for pedestrian violations in Hawai‘i is not only excessive but deeply inequitable. A pedestrian can be fined **\$130 to \$180** for a minor crossing infraction, while many moving violations for drivers—such as certain speeding tickets—carry lower penalties. This is a fundamental misalignment of risk and consequence. A driver’s mistake poses a far greater danger to public safety than a pedestrian’s choice of where to cross, yet our laws disproportionately punish the person on foot.

These exorbitant fines do not enhance safety; they create a significant financial burden for residents, particularly those who rely on walking as their primary mode of transportation. From 2018 to 2023, Hawai‘i issued an average of **5,000 jaywalking tickets per year**, a rate significantly higher than most other places in the U.S., with no evidence that this aggressive enforcement has improved pedestrian safety outcomes.

Reducing these fines to a nominal \$25 acknowledges that the primary goal should be education and creating safe walking environments, not revenue generation from vulnerable road users. It brings our penalties in line with the actual risk and helps ensure that a simple mistake does not lead to financial hardship.

I urge you to pass HB1524 to reform an unjust system and refocus our efforts on engineering safe streets, not punishing people for using them.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.