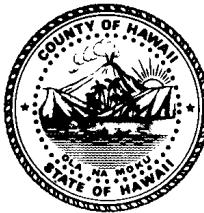


**HEATHER L. KIMBALL**  
**COUNCIL DISTRICT 1**  
(North Hilo, Hāmākua, and portion of  
Waimea)



Phone: (808) 961-8828  
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**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL**  
25 Aupuni Street, Ste. 1402, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 4, 2026

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs  
Honorable Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Honorable Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
**Submission via online testimony only**

**RE: Support of HB 2061 – Relating to Firearms (State Gun Buyback Program)**

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit **testimony in strong SUPPORT of HB 2061**, which provides funding for Hawai'i's statewide gun buyback program and ensures that at least two buyback events are held annually in each county. Providing dedicated funding and guaranteeing events in each county ensures equity for residents outside of O'ahu to have the same opportunity to participate.

This measure reflects a practical, community-based approach to gun violence prevention. It gives residents a safe, anonymous way to dispose of unwanted or unlawful firearms and helps law enforcement remove weapons from circulation before they are lost, stolen, misused, or involved in accidents.

As a Hawai'i County Council Member representing the rural Hāmākua district, I see every day how important accessible public safety programs are for neighbor islands. Rural communities often have longer response times and fewer services, which makes prevention even more critical.

Being an officer of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties (HSAC), I also appreciate that this bill is part of the HSAC legislative package that reflects strong state-county collaboration. County police departments and the Department of Law Enforcement are uniquely positioned to host these events and engage directly with residents. With stable funding, we can scale what is already working and make these programs more consistent by investing in prevention rather than reaction and by giving residents simple, voluntary ways to make their homes and communities safer statewide.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your consideration and support to pass H.B. 2061. If you would like to discuss my knowledge of this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather L. Kimball".

HEATHER L. KIMBALL

**Rebecca V. Like**  
Prosecuting Attorney



**Keola Siu**  
First Deputy  
Prosecuting Attorney

## OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

### County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i

3990 Ka'ana Street, Suite 210, Lihu'e, Hawai'i 96766

808-241-1888 ~ FAX 808-241-1758

Victim/Witness Program 808-241-1898 or 800-668-5734

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
Thirty-third State Legislature  
Regular session of 2026  
State of Hawai'i  
February 4, 2026

### **RE: HB 2061. Relating to Firearms**

Dear Chair Tarnas and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **SUPPORT** of this bill, which would appropriate money to support the State's gun buyback program for at least two gun buyback events in each county.

Gun buybacks are a practical, voluntary tool that reduce the number of unwanted and unsecured firearms in our communities. They provide a safe, judgment-free way for residents to dispose of guns they no longer want or need – particularly firearms that might otherwise be accessible to children, stolen or misused.

From a public safety perspective, buyback programs are preventative. They reduce the risk of accidental shootings, suicides and domestic violence incidents. They also help law enforcement safely remove firearms from circulation without criminalizing lawful gun owners. These programs are especially effective when paired with community outreach and safe-storage education.

These programs do not replace enforcement or other violence-prevention strategies, but they do complement them. They are cost-effective, non-controversial and widely supported proactive solutions to reduce gun-related harm. For these reasons, our Office supports this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:19:26 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Asam	Mid Pacific Pistol League	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Mid Pacific Pistol League respectfully submits testimony in opposition to HB 2061.

HB 2061 proposes taxpayer-funded firearm buyback programs that are fiscally inefficient and lack evidence of public safety benefits. Once administrative, staffing, and security costs are included, the cost per firearm often far exceeds the compensation provided.

Mid Pacific Pistol League believes public funds would be better allocated toward firearm safety education, lawful transfer programs, or self-funded initiatives that do not burden taxpayers.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to oppose HB 2061.

Respectfully,  
Mid Pacific Pistol League

# Hawai‘i State Association of Counties (HSAC)

Counties of Kaua‘i, Maui, Hawai‘i, and City & County of Honolulu

Website: [hawaiicounties.org](http://hawaiicounties.org) | Email: [hsac@hawaiicounties.org](mailto:hsac@hawaiicounties.org)



## Testimony of the Hawai‘i State Association of Counties

### H.B. No. 2061 - Support

#### Relating to Firearms

Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Monday, February 5, 2026, 2 p.m.

The Hawai‘i State Association of Counties (HSAC) is a non-profit organization that represents the collective interests of Hawai‘i’s four counties: the County of Kaua‘i, County of Maui, County of Hawai‘i, and the City and County of Honolulu. HSAC’s membership includes the elected members of each county council, who advocate for policies and programs that strengthen county government, improve public safety, and enhance the quality of life for residents statewide. Through this work, HSAC helps ensure that counties are better positioned to address shared challenges and that statewide policies reflect county-level realities, an important outcome that helps make all counties stronger.

Counties play a critical role in residents’ daily lives by delivering a wide array of essential services, including law enforcement and emergency response, public works and infrastructure, water and wastewater systems, parks and recreation, housing, public health coordination, and community services. Because counties are responsible for implementing and supporting many public safety and social service functions, policies that prevent harm and reduce demand on emergency and social systems are especially impactful at the county level.

HSAC supports this measure, which appropriates funds to the Department of Law Enforcement to sustain and expand the State’s gun buyback program, including the requirement that at least two gun buyback events be held annually in each county. This bill is one of two evidence-based gun safety proposals included in HSAC’s 2026 legislative package, both of which emphasize prevention, early intervention, and strategies proven to reduce gun violence and suicide risk.

Gun buyback programs provide residents with a safe, voluntary, and anonymous way to dispose of unwanted or unlawful firearms, including unregistered “ghost guns.” These programs

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complement county and state law enforcement efforts by reducing the number of firearms that could otherwise be used in suicides, domestic violence incidents, or accidental shootings, while also promoting safe firearm storage through the distribution of gun locks.

Recent results from O‘ahu demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs and underscore the value of a consistent, statewide approach. In April 2025, a gun buyback event on O‘ahu collected approximately 367 firearms and distributed \$37,900 in Foodland Farms gift cards. A subsequent event in August 2025, conducted in partnership between the Honolulu Police Department and the Department of Law Enforcement, collected 83 firearms, including unregistered ghost guns and replica firearms. These events removed hundreds of firearms from circulation and highlighted the importance of expanding buyback opportunities to Maui County, Hawai‘i County, and Kaua‘i County on a regular and predictable basis.

HSAC views this measure as an important component of broader county and state public safety efforts, including investments in training, enforcement, and public awareness related to Hawai‘i’s Gun Violence Protective Order law. Together, these approaches focus on prevention and early intervention, acting before tragedy occurs, while reducing long-term demands on county services such as law enforcement, emergency medical response, public health systems, and social services.

By ensuring equitable access to gun buyback events across all four counties, this measure supports local law enforcement, promotes safer communities, and strengthens counties’ ability to continue providing essential services that residents rely on every day.

HSAC respectfully urges the committee to support HB 2061. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony and look forward to continued work with the Legislature and state agencies to advance practical, evidence-based solutions that benefit all counties and the people they serve.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:23:59 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mery Ann Luna	SDM Training Group/Bows N Bullets	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

My name is Mery Ann Luna, owner of SDM Training Group/Bows N Bullets, and I respectfully oppose this bill appropriating funds for Hawaii's firearm buyback program.

While framed as a violence prevention effort, gun buyback programs have consistently failed to demonstrate measurable reductions in violent crime or suicide rates. National studies and law enforcement reviews show that buybacks primarily collect older, inoperable, or legally owned firearms — not the weapons most commonly used in criminal activity.

The bill itself highlights hundreds of firearms collected, yet offers no data connecting these events to reduced assaults, homicides, or suicides. Removing lawfully owned firearms from responsible citizens does not address criminal behavior, illegal trafficking, or the root causes of violence.

Additionally, allocating taxpayer funds for gift cards in exchange for personal property is an inefficient use of public resources. Those funds would be far better invested in mental health services, targeted law enforcement against violent offenders, community policing, and firearms safety education — programs with proven public safety outcomes.

Hawaii already maintains some of the nation's strictest firearm regulations and low rates of gun violence. Expanding symbolic programs without evidence of effectiveness places financial burden on the State without delivering real safety benefits.

For these reasons, Bows N Bullets urges you to oppose this bill.

Respectfully,  
Mery Ann Luna  
Owner, SDM Training Group/Bows N Bullets

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:04:06 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jerry Yuen	Pu'uloa Rifle and Pistol Club	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill because I believe that gun buybacks are an ineffective way to prevent crime and may even increase it. It is also not a cost effective way to dispose of unwanted guns. Some of the guns being surrendered have cash or historical values that outweigh the gift cards given in exchange. Efforts should be made to auction off certain valuable guns rather than have them destroyed. Enterprising criminals can cheaply manufacture guns for less than \$50 and get the \$200 gift card.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:57:22 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael I Rice	Individual	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

**Comments:**

I stand opposed to gun buybacks on principle as I believe they are a waste of time and effort that could be best used elsewhere to reduce gun violence and accidents. I thus wish to submit COMMENTS.

A friend of mine, a combat veteran who moved here from Texas to be with his wife's family, had his father in law recently pass away who owned some firearms. He was unsure what to do with the firearms as he had no idea about Hawaii's gun laws but still wanted to keep them to honor his father in law. After being advised on State Law and beginning to make efforts to become a lawful gun owner, including having the required classes scheduled for himself, his wife, and his sister in law. He was notified that an untrustworthy individual became aware of the firearms and showed an 'unhealthy interest' in them.

Fearing the firearms would be stolen before he and the other family members could legally take possession of the guns, he instead opted to turn the weapons in at a Gun Buyback. He hates that that was the most viable option for him given the sentimental connection to father in law, on top of the real value of the guns compared to what they received through gift cards.

I would much rather see laws relaxed in terms of transferring firearms. I think a better system would be to allow FFLs (Gun Stores) to take possession of firearms that individuals wish to surrender, even if temporarily. FFLs would then do a primary inspection to render the firearm safe and then contact local police to do a secondary inspection and background check on the firearm.

This secondary inspection would be to see if the firearm itself is illegal or stolen or tied to an ongoing case and needs to be turned over to Law Enforcement for appropriate action, or is otherwise legal and could be released to the FFL. In the latter case the FFL could offer fair market value for the firearm and work with the current holder in selling the firearm on the legal market. Alternately if they simply wish the firearm to be destroyed for whatever reason and turn it over to HPD. Or, in my friend's case they can be held securely until they can legally be acquired by the individual.

This can help to reduce the cost of the program, and help prevent chaos associated with hosting

buybacks such as security risks and reduce the potential for theft of firearms at such events. This can also be done year round as opposed to 2 times a year.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:59:41 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Pitman	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I respectfully **oppose HB2061**, which appropriates moneys from the State's general revenues to the Department of Law Enforcement to support the gun buyback program, including requirements for at least two buyback events per county.

While voluntary firearm surrender programs may appeal to some as a public safety measure, HB2061 would use taxpayer funds to promote and expand a program with limited proven effectiveness, questionable value, and potential unintended consequences in a state already facing budget pressures.

**1. Limited Evidence of Effectiveness** Gun buyback programs have been studied extensively nationwide, and research (including from criminologists and public health experts) consistently shows they do not meaningfully reduce gun violence, homicides, or suicides. Buybacks typically collect older, less functional firearms from law-abiding owners who are not the source of criminal misuse, while criminals rarely participate. In Hawaii, where gun crime and violence rates are already among the lowest in the U.S. due to strict existing laws, cultural factors, and geography, funding more events is unlikely to produce measurable reductions in firearms-related incidents. Resources would be better directed toward proven interventions like mental health services, community violence interruption, or targeted enforcement against illegal trafficking.

**2. Fiscal Irresponsibility** Hawaii faces significant budget constraints, with competing priorities in education, housing affordability, infrastructure, and core law enforcement needs. Appropriating unspecified funds ("\$ or so much thereof as may be necessary") for buyback events—plus administrative costs, advertising, and logistics—diverts money from higher-impact areas. Past buybacks in Hawaii and elsewhere have often yielded low participation relative to cost, with firearms collected at inflated prices that incentivize turning in junk guns while doing little to address root causes of violence.

**3. Potential to Undermine Law-Abiding Gun Owners** Buyback programs can stigmatize lawful firearm ownership by framing guns themselves as inherently problematic, rather than focusing on criminal behavior or misuse. In a state with stringent permitting, registration, and storage requirements, law-abiding residents should not see their rights or property indirectly targeted through government-funded initiatives that imply widespread danger from legal firearms. Additionally, buybacks risk creating a false sense of security, diverting attention from more effective policies.

**4. Better Alternatives Exist** Instead of funding buybacks, the Legislature could prioritize voluntary, no-cost safe storage education, anonymous tip lines for illegal guns, enhanced mental health crisis intervention, or incentives for secure storage devices. These approaches respect constitutional rights while addressing real risks without wasteful spending.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to **vote "do not pass"** on HB2061 and refrain from advancing it. Hawaii's resources should focus on evidence-based, fiscally responsible solutions that enhance public safety without unnecessary government expenditure or infringement on lawful rights.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:01:51 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Barber Jr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Bring back gun education in schools.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:05:43 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian A	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill!!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:09:30 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Duquez	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Strongly disagree, if citizens want to sell their guns that's fine.

the event shouldn't be taxpayer funded. They can sell to existing gun stores if they want to.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:25:02 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
jason moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

What a great success this program has been. I fully support this HB2061 Bill for an Act. I would even be in favor of upping the gift card amount so that there is more of an incentive for the public to relinquish their family members unsafely stored firearms. I'm all in favor of providing free firearm locks to anyone who brings their firearm to the police station or to a return program location.

The financial cost on all this is so minimal compared the value of a life.

Thank you for your public service

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:32:59 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcus Tanaka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

This isn't enough to be meaningful. You need to give close to market rate cash for anyone who turns in guns if you are truely serious about a buy back program.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:45:46 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Bell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I do not support HB2061

Please use funds in a better way that helps the public

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 3:59:37 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Domingo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB 2061.

This program doesn't work. Besides, any that desires to turn their firearm/s in can do so at any time. Stop fear mongering and educate.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:17:24 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jen Ching	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:****HB 2061 – Relating to Firearms**

This bill appropriates government funds for firearm buyback programs.

Although individuals typically receive only \$100 to \$150 per firearm, the actual cost to taxpayers often exceeds \$500 per firearm once administrative and operational expenses are included.

These funds would be better used for public education on legal firearm transfer or disposal through licensed dealers, or through a self-funded buyback model in which firearms are lawfully resold rather than destroyed.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:28:40 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kimo galon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose HB2061. Again this is a waste of taxpayers' money. The data on the effectiveness of the buyback program is not sufficient enough to show an impact on gun violence. There is no way the miniscule incentive will attract high profile criminals to turn in any of their illegal firearms

Appropriating funds to something like these gun buy backs yield low and could be funneled to something more useful and help the community directly. The legislative body should first invest into mental health programs and firearm safety programs that would direct impact to the issues at hand.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:28:45 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Written Testimony in Opposition to HB2061 (JHA, FIN)**

Aloha Chair Matayoshi and Members of the Committees,

I submit this written testimony in opposition to HB2061. Gun buyback programs primarily collect legally owned firearms from law-abiding residents and have not been shown to reduce crime or violence. Using taxpayer funds for these programs diverts resources from more effective public safety strategies, including enforcement of existing laws and mental health and community-based prevention efforts.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose HB2061.

Mahalo,  
**Teri Kia Savaiinaea**

Wai'anae resident

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:35:36 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I strongly oppose HB2061

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:36:52 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoe Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I strongly oppose HB2061

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:39:00 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mikhael Kobayashi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Vote no. Don't misspend my tax dollars

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:42:39 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elijah Tavares	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:53:37 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pearson Ahuna	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 4:54:28 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luke Reiss	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Taking away the guns of the people is taking away the people means to self defence from government sponsored tyranny. Such as Nazi Germanys gun confiscation leading to the disarmament of thousands of victims to be killed by evil state government. Also like the bolshevick revoltion in russia and other communist revolutions around the world like Pol Pot in combodia and China that has taken away the guns of its citizens so they cannot defend themselves from the attrocities done the evil state governments. Gun control= Genocide.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:02:56 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel Webb	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill because, it is a waste of money going towards old hunting rifles and shotguns.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:06:14 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Aloha Representatives of the committee, I stand in opposition to hb2061, mahalo

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 5:14:09 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Ley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Brian Ley county GMAC district 4 commissioner.I strongly oppose HB2061 taxpayer money could be better spent educating the public, and having gun stores buy the firearms or dropped off at the police station if in a illegal or non functioning condition. please stop finding new ways to waste taxpayer money

Aloha Chairperson Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe and Committee Members,

BI OPPOSE SB 2061.

It “looks good” optically. Gun buyback programs are often framed as a common-sense public safety measure, but when you look closely, they raise serious concerns about effectiveness, fairness, and responsible use of taxpayer dollars. To me, there are Five (5) that need to be stated for the record.

**First, there is little evidence that gun buybacks meaningfully reduce crime or violence.**

Most firearms turned in during buyback events are old, non-functional, or rarely used weapons. The people most likely to participate are **law-abiding residents who already pose little risk to public safety—not individuals engaged in violent crime**. As a result, buybacks tend to remove guns that are least likely to be used harmfully, while doing nothing to disrupt criminal activity.

**Second, buyback programs are a poor return on investment for taxpayers.**

State funds are limited. Every dollar spent on purchasing firearms is a dollar not spent on programs with proven outcomes, such as **mental health treatment, substance abuse services, violence interruption programs, or reentry and rehabilitation** efforts. Taxpayers deserve policies that **measurably improve safety**, not *symbolic gestures* that sound good but produce unclear results.

**Third, buybacks effectively pay citizens to surrender property they already legally own.**

This raises a fairness issue. Taxpayers—including those who do not own firearms—are asked to fund payments to others for exercising a legal right. That approach creates an uncomfortable precedent: using public money to incentivize the relinquishment of constitutionally protected property rather than addressing misuse through enforcement and prevention.

**Fourth, buybacks do not target the root causes of gun violence.**

Gun violence is closely tied to factors like untreated mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, poverty, and recidivism. Removing a small number of firearms from circulation does not address why violence occurs in the first place. Effective public safety policy should focus on people and behavior—not just objects.

**Fifth, buyback programs risk creating a false sense of security.**

When the state promotes buybacks as a solution, it can give the public the impression that meaningful action has been taken, even when underlying problems remain untouched. This can delay or crowd out harder—but more effective—policy choices. Again, optically this gesture promotes “safety” but those that intend to do harm still possess the weapon.

## **A Better Use of Public Funds**

If the goal is safer communities, taxpayer money would be better spent on:

- Evidence-based violence prevention programs

- Mental health and addiction treatment
- Strong enforcement against illegal firearms trafficking
- Community-based interventions that reduce repeat offending

These approaches focus on reducing harm directly, rather than symbolically removing items that were unlikely to cause harm in the first place.

In closing, Gun buybacks may be well-intentioned, but they are an inefficient, inequitable, and largely symbolic use of public funds. Taxpayers deserve policies grounded in evidence, accountability, and real public safety outcomes—not feel-good solutions with questionable impact.

Respectfully,

Kamuela Kojima

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 6:41:05 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

If you are trying to infringe on law abiding citizens 2nd amendment rights by writing laws, then you are in violation of the oath you took to uphold the constitution and are not a viable representative.

Stop trying to waste tax payer money.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:11:54 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brian Kitaoka	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Good Afternoon. I wanted to state that I oppose the gun buyback program in its current form. Has anyone looked to work with gun shops for input to improve or gather ideas? I understand the intent but was there any study conducted after that last batch that were done? With the current state's fiscal picture, I think our monies are better spent in other programs including improving mental health assistance. Thank you for letting me share my viewpoint! Aloha!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:16:18 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Wayne Asam	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

My name is Wayne Asam, and I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to HB 2061.

HB 2061 appropriates taxpayer funds for firearm buyback programs that have little evidence of reducing crime. While participants may receive modest compensation, the actual cost to taxpayers often exceeds \$500 per firearm when administrative and operational expenses are included.

These funds would be better used for public education on lawful firearm transfer or disposal through licensed dealers rather than expensive and ineffective buyback programs.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to oppose HB 2061.

Respectfully,  
Wayne Asam

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:17:21 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kai Asam	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

My name is Kai Asam, and I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 2061.

As a taxpayer and parent, I am concerned about the inefficient use of public funds. Firearm buyback programs are costly and have not shown meaningful results in improving public safety.

Taxpayer dollars should be spent on programs with proven effectiveness, not expensive initiatives with questionable outcomes.

I respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 2061.

Sincerely,  
Kai Asam

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:18:15 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Xander Asam	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

My name is Xander Asam, and I am a student submitting testimony in opposition to HB 2061.

I believe it is important to use taxpayer money responsibly. Firearm buyback programs cost much more than they return in public benefit, and there is little evidence they reduce crime.

Public funds should be used wisely and effectively. I respectfully ask the committee to oppose HB 2061.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,  
Xander Asam

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:24:59 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Justin Muneoka-Nagy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill because using any funds for a gun buy back program is misguided and a waste. These funds should go towards firearms education of legal transfers or disposal through licensed dealers.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 7:44:13 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jarrod Goode	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

This bill is a direct infringement on my 2nd amendment right. You cannot impose a bill which makes me relinquish my firearms that I have in my possession by following your mandated rules that again infringe on my 2nd amendment right. You have no right to take away my firearms that I have in my possession while following your unconstitutional laws you put in place for me to acquire them. Please strike this bill down.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:36:19 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Uchiyama	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:39:20 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Kamau	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose using tax payer funding for the firearm buy back program. Maybe use the money for public education on legal firearm transfer or disposal via licensed firearm dealers. Mahalo.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 8:44:08 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

KĀKO‘O ‘OLE. I do not support this bill.

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:12:14 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael A. Cobb Jr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this measure. We should not be using taxpayer money to fund gun confiscation in any form. If violence is up then the armed and prepared “victim” is an instant deterrent to criminals. We should praise those who defend themselves, remove laws that favor the criminals, let us protect ourselves.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:37:19 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Timothy Miyao	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Honorable Members of the House Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs Committee,**

**Please oppose HB 2061: Hawai'i State Association of Counties Package; Firearms; Buyback; Department of Law Enforcement; Appropriation . In the local news, I frequently see that many (including members of the Hawaii State government) are concerned over the economic uncertainty for Hawaii. Limited budgetary funds should therefore go toward impactful programs that address immediate problems.**

**Gun buyback programs would take funding that could be allocated to problems impacting citizens every day.**

**Hawaii falls within the top 10 states with the worst driving conditions. Poor road quality is one of the factors that keeps our state in this rating. This not only impacts the safety of drivers and passengers. Poorly maintained roads cost Hawaii drivers millions of dollars each year. Counties should be prioritizing funds toward improving road conditions, not purchasing rusted scrap metal.**

**I applaud legislation like HB1779 which would help children who suffer from food insecurity. For some students, school meals are the only source of reliable nutrition available. For others, they may not fall within the parameters to qualify for free meals. Yet for these children, parents may not be afford to provide them with breakfast. These students go the entire day without eating. They are expected to learn while not having nutrition and meals to fuel them. Many teachers have students going to them asking for food. There are many children who would benefit from free school meal programs. Helping children to gain nutrition necessary, to thrive, is a worthy allocation of taxpayer dollars.**

**I urge you to oppose HB 2061 which would take funding from crucial programs. With the economic uncertainty for our state, it is important to prioritize funding allocation to address Hawaii's greatest needs. Ensuring that children do not live with food insecurity needs to be prioritized. Roads need to be safe and maintained.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:41:25 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chase Cavitt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I am opposed to HB2061 and hope to encourage that this bill be rewritten and or opposed. I believe the idea of the bill is to remove unwanted firearms of those that do not have them legally or do not want them. I believe this can be done without using nearly as much tax dollars as well as giving more money into the economy.

FFL's could easily accept unwanted firearms and be documented by the police and registered. The person turning them in could fill out the form with the FFL and they could potentially earn more doing so without a burning on the tax payer. If this is a illegal firearm, such as a fully automatic firearm, then it can be turned over to the police for destruction. If legal, it can be registered by the FFL and then sold on consignment. The person turning it in could then collect potentially more for the firearm and not be a burned on taxpayers.

I have read that the \$100 payment used to pay for the buyback program costs nearly \$500 in taxpayers money to go through the current process. This bill is promoting more of these events and is in my opinion missusing our funds to do so. If there is a better way to do this and save the state tax payers money then this idea should be considered.

I also see ways that my suggestion could lead to better investigation techniques by law enforcement to ensure criminals aren't participating in government firearm buying programs in order to get a few bucks without a slap on the wrist. They know no questions will be asked. Although this is good for people who inherited firearms from family that didn't follow laws, the same fact allows for malicious individuals to misuse the system to avoid scrutiny when turning a stolen firearm.

This is a bad bill and more can be done to lead to the intended outcome with less of a burden on tax payers money. Please do more research and talk to firearms businesses and owners and see what we have to say. We're not your enemies and we want a safer state as well. Ironically the very act of ignoring us all is what likely leads to the less safe society that the authors of this bill claim to want to prevent. Please vote NO on this bill.

- Chase Cavitt



**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 9:54:36 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vincent Tibbles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

This bill is illegal. This violates the second amendment of the United States constitution. I do not support this bill or using my tax dollars to strip away my god given right to own firearms. This bill should not pass!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:02:59 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jordan Au	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

To whom it may concern,

I strongly oppose HB 2061 because gun buybacks are ineffective and scam people out of the real value of their firearms. The bill states "The legislature believes that the gun buyback program helps reduce firearms-related assaults and suicides, and gun-related accidents involving children." I believe this is false on every level. If someone wants to commit a crime or commit suicide, offering to give them a gift card in exchange for the item they planned to use will do nothing. I challenge anyone to prove offering someone up to \$200 in gift cards per item will stop someone from committing a crime or committing suicide. Finally \$200 or less is a small fraction of what just about all firearms are worth, if you go to any gun store in the nation there will be very few if any firearms that cost less than \$200. Offering people such a small amount for their firearms is a rip off and preys on the uninformed. Many people would get way more money selling their firearms to a gun store or law abiding fun owner. For these reasons and many more I won't list for the sake of brevity I strongly oppose HB 2061.

Thank you

Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair  
Representative Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs (JHA)  
Hearing: Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.  
Regarding: **HB2061 (Relating to Firearms)**  
**Voter Position: OPPOSITION**

Members of the JHA Committee,

I express my **opposition** to **HB2061 (Relating to Firearms)**.

### **Pointless Legislation**

**HB2061** imposes material, recurring costs on Hawaii taxpayers without evidence-based or otherwise credible public-safety benefit. Empirical reviews consistently find that voluntary buybacks do not reduce gun homicides or suicides. The National Research Council's (NRC's) comprehensive review finds that the so-called "buybacks" have not been shown to reduce firearm violence or suicide<sup>1</sup>. Data from RAND's systematic review similarly finds no persuasive evidence that firearm "buybacks" reduce firearm homicide, suicide, or violent crime. Instead, RAND data studies shows that firearm "buybacks" do not measurably reduce gun violence. In the aptly titled study, "*Gun Buyback Programs in the United States*," RAND notably points outs how:

"There is **little empirical research** on the effectiveness of gun buyback programs in the United States, in part because of the challenges associated with measuring the effects of small, locally run programs..."

...Furthermore, the intended impacts are **implausible** because too few firearms are turned in to gun buybacks, at least as currently implemented. Given these limitations, policymakers and community groups should consider whether the scarce resources allocated to gun buybacks—even if these resources are minimal—**might be better spent on more-promising violence prevention efforts.**"<sup>2</sup>

### **Hidden Costs to Tax Payers**

The State of Hawaii did not purchase private firearms on behalf of firearm owners. All the State did was charge everyone a tax for a right via the General Excise Tax scheme. Accordingly, the term "buyback" is already a dubious term. By exchanging mere gift cards in exchange for firearms purchased with actual money, the term "buyback" can be considered an altogether misnomer since a mere gift card is the only item produced from the "buyback." Public safety isn't a byproduct of the "buyback."

As it turns out, gift cards used in past "buyback" events are not free. Anything purchased by the State is first acquired via tax-funded pools of money taken from constituents. Future "buyback" events will in turn, result in expenditure of tax-payer funds on privately acquired property, with an emphasis on the fact that the State did **not** initiate the firearm purchase.

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<sup>1</sup> National Research Council (NRC), *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review* (2004). <https://www.nationalacademies.org/publications/10881?search=&search=Firearms+and+Violence%3A+A+Critical+Review+&pagination-page-select=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nationalacademies.org%2Fpublications%2F10881%3Fpage%3D1>

<sup>2</sup> RAND Corporation, Gun Buyback Programs (Gun Policy in America). (2003). <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/gun-buyback-programs.html>

**Vote No: There is No Substantive, Evidence-based Defense**

**HB2061** would commit taxpayer funds to a program with obviously foreseeable gift-card-for-gun scheme with no truly credible track record of reducing gun homicides or suicides in the State. Datasets showing an X-number of gift cards corresponding to an X-amount of guns “bought back” does not magically guarantee public safety. I urge you to vote NO on **HB2061** and instead redirect resources that don’t incur additional cost to the tax-payer. A State-sponsored safety course is more likely to yield public safety benefits.

As a researcher from the University of Maryland concluded their study about the benefits of firearm safety training, Professor Rod Brunson and Assistant Professor Brooklynn Hitchen points out how:

“The solution to urban gun violence is complex and requires that we look at the **root causes** of the violence, which includes concentrated disadvantage, structural racism and **blocked opportunity**.”<sup>3</sup>

The State already imposes compulsory firearm proficiency and firearm/firearm storage law comprehension testing for the issuance of concealed firearm licenses, so why can’t the State take the time to provide firearm safety educate the public? What express justification is there to pass the cost of firearm proficiency and safety education to a constituent that wants to exercise a baseline Constitutional right by forcing them to take a private education course? Superfluous gun “buyback” programs block opportunities to enhance public safety by stifling potential funding for public firearm safety education programs. Leaving your constituents in the dark without an affordable, publicly accessible alternative to private firearm safety and proficiency education course constitutes a disservice to the very foundational pillar of public safety.

Thank you for taking the time to review this testimony.

Respectfully,

Ryan C. Tinajero

Voting Constituent from **House District 48**

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<sup>3</sup> University of Maryland, *High-risk Communities Would Benefit From Firearm Safety Training*, <https://ccjs.umd.edu/feature/umd-study-high-risk-communities-would-benefit-firearm-safety-training>

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 10:54:22 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Reid Oya	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I'm a lifelong Hawaii resident, a law-abiding gun owner, and a taxpayer who's fed up with feel-good legislation that wastes our money and does nothing to actually make our communities safer. I'm writing today to strongly oppose HB 2061, which throws more taxpayer dollars at the state's gun buyback program and mandates at least two buyback events in every county. This bill is a classic example of feel-good politics over real solutions. Gun buybacks have been studied for decades, and the evidence is clear: they don't reduce violent crime, they don't get guns out of the hands of criminals, and they're an expensive waste of public funds. Criminals don't turn in their illegal weapons for a \$100 gift card—they keep them to commit more crimes. Who does turn guns in? Mostly law-abiding people surrendering old, inherited, or unwanted firearms that were never a problem in the first place. Studies from places like the National Academy of Sciences, the RAND Corporation, and even some police departments have repeatedly shown that buyback programs have no measurable impact on gun violence, homicides, or suicides. So what are we doing here? Spending limited state money—money that could go toward actual public safety priorities like more police on the streets, better mental health services, addressing our drug crisis, or fixing our broken roads—to buy back a handful of rusty revolvers and broken shotguns from grandparents and collectors. Meanwhile, violent crime in parts of Oahu and the neighbor islands keeps climbing, and we're told this is somehow going to help? HB 2061 also encourages the collection of "unwanted or unlawful" firearms, including ghost guns and semi-automatics. But Hawaii already has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation—registration, permits, background checks on everything, bans on many types of firearms. If someone has an actually illegal gun, they're not walking into a buyback event; they're either hiding it or using it. This program just gives politicians a photo op while doing zilch to stop real threats. As a taxpayer, I'm insulted that my hard-earned money is being funneled into something so ineffective when we have real needs screaming for funding. Our schools need repairs, our hospitals are stretched thin, our homeless crisis is out of control, and families are struggling with the highest cost of living in the country. Why are we prioritizing symbolic gun grabs over those urgent issues? I urge you to kill HB 2061. Stop wasting taxpayer dollars on programs that don't work and focus on policies that actually reduce crime and keep our communities safe—more resources for law enforcement, tougher sentences for violent offenders, and real investment in prevention and mental health. Thank you for your time and for considering the views of law-abiding residents who just want effective, evidence-based solutions—not more political theater.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:49:53 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
RICHARD HOLIBAUGH	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Hello, thank you for reading my testimony. I urge you to oppose HB2061.

Thank you.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 3:17:26 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandon Santiago	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose HB 2061.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 4:50:19 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Nelson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

If an individual typically receives only \$100 per firearm, the actual cost to taxpayers often exceeds \$500 per firearm once administrative and operational expenses are included. The buyback is not a safely driven measure taken but a scare tactic & promotes crimes by publicly advertising "free money" to thieves!! A \$100 buys lots of drugs to an addict. You will increase gun theft from legal owners homes and put more drug use on our streets.

I believe these funds would be better used for public education on legal firearm transfer or disposal through licensed dealers, or through a self-funded buyback model in which firearms are lawfully resold rather than destroyed.

You are expanding government overreach and spending taxpayers hard earned money while raising serious concerns about due process and fiscal responsibility.

Stop making laws against law abiding gun owners your focus & ownership more difficult than you do already in Hawaii. Suggesting more bills on gun rights wastes your time and my hard earned taxpayer money!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 5:43:46 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chester Holt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Studies have shown that gun buy back programs have no effect on gun crimes or violence. Furthermore guns from buy backs have been found at crime scenes. This raises the question could we even trust the police here in Hawaii to perform the service without corruption or deception. Who knows? Hawaii county police department has already last year, moved to quash a subpoena from the state Attorney General relating to crimes committed by officers. If that doesn't shake your confidence you might have been in politics too long.

I believe these funds should be used for education about gun safety and domestic violence prevention.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:11:27 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Gibson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose he 2061

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 6:52:17 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Robertson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Gun buybacks are a huge waste of taxpayers funds. Illegal arms can be turned in anytime. And many of the firearms turned in are WWII relics of little danger and great historical value. What a shame to destroy those elements of history!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:18:14 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth Pascarelli	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

As a concerned citizen and resident I urge you to oppose this bill. It should allocate funds for safety rather than waste tax money buying guns and costing taxpayers more to dispose of the guns.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:41:11 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jon Abbott	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB2061

This is a complete waste of tax payer funds as gun buy back programs do not reduce crime rates.

I urge the Committee to OPPOSE HB2061

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 7:59:36 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cabjuan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Oppose this bill. Our previous buyback program did not stop any of the numerous crimes involving a firearm in Hawaii. We have had increasing amounts of HPD reported crime using a gun.

Where are the stats on legal vs illegal guns in crimes in Hawaii? Stop wasting tax \$\$ on these silly programs and focus on catching the criminals.

Do not pass this bill please.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:22:41 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mitchell H. Weber	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE HB2061!

Gun buybacks do nothing to stop the flow of guns to criminals. You are merely duping widows into turning over valuable antiques. I've also been told that due to operational costs that these historic firearms cost up to 500 dollars per firearm to collect and destroy. \$650 per gun is ridiculous, this is a waste of time and money.

Mitchell Weber.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:35:07 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
scott shimoda	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this measure. The funds for this would be better used for education and legal disposal. Also research from the NBER found that these programs do not lead to a measurable decrease in firearm violence in either the short or long term. Thank you.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:52:31 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stanley Mendes	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I strongly oppose HB2061

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:52:53 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
NOAH DRAZKOWSKI	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

This is a waste of tax payers money. Instead each police department should allow people to surrender their firearms without question. The money being allocated for this "buy back" program could better go towards students, schools, teachers, and public education or other programs that will benefit the people of Hawaii. This does not create a safer Hawaii. It waste Hawaii tax dollars.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:56:49 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Craig Woodward	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Aloha,

I oppose this bill because it does nothing to address the actual illegal firearms issue, criminal who obtain firearms illegal do not intend to turn in their firearms, this evidence is backed by the amount of shootings hawaii has seen since these buy back programs have been put in place. Again criminals who obtain illegal firearms do not attend this buy back programs, the majority of the 376 firearms collected were from law-abiding citizens who either inherited, lost interest, or were fearmongered into giving up their firearms.

Also the \$37,000 of tax payer funds is going straight into the foodland corporation. Not back into the community to educate about responsible firearm ownership, That money does nothing to further combat the culture behind irresponsible gun ownership.

Instead we should push owners to sell their firearms to established local dealers where they could use that money to purchase classes to better understand their rights and learn how to be a responsible and safe gun owner.

Thank you,

Craig

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:21:36 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank DeJesus III	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose HB2061 because it infringes on my 4th & 5th amendment rights

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:31:22 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Vernelle Oku	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

The Hawaii state government should not be in the gun buying business.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:35:47 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nico Cartagena	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair/Inouye, Vice Chair Say, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 2061, which would appropriate general funds to support a statewide gun buyback program including no fewer than two events per county.

I oppose this bill for the following reasons:

1. Gun Buybacks Are Not Proven to Meaningfully Reduce Crime

Gun buyback programs often collect firearms that are already unlikely to be used in criminal activity — including old, malfunctioning, or otherwise unwanted guns. There is limited empirical evidence showing that such programs significantly lower violent crime or suicide rates. Funding a program without clear proof of its public safety effectiveness diverts scarce state resources from interventions with stronger data behind them.

## 2. Poor Return on Public Investment

Appropriating hard-earned taxpayer dollars for gift cards in exchange for firearms — while appealing superficially — may not offer a sound financial return for improving public safety. Gift card incentives paid for semi-automatic rifles, functioning handguns, or other operational weapons through anonymous exchanges can do little to disrupt criminal markets. The Legislature should prioritize fiscally responsible measures that demonstrably reduce harm.

## 3. Focus Should Be on Evidence-Based Safety Measures

If the goal is reducing firearm injuries and deaths, Hawaii could invest in programs backed by data — such as suicide prevention, mental health crisis response, community intervention initiatives, safe storage education with measurable outcomes, and increased enforcement of existing violent crime statutes. Appropriations should reflect strategies proven to save lives and reduce violence.

## 4. Encourages the Disposal of Lawfully Owned Property Without Addressing Root Causes

While incentivizing the voluntary surrender of firearms may seem constructive, it can also encourage individuals to relinquish legally owned property without addressing underlying issues such as suicide risk, domestic violence, or illegal firearm trafficking. The bill does not tie the buybacks to specific strategies that directly target these root causes.

## 5. Potential Unintended Consequences and Community Trust

Some residents — particularly rural and law-abiding gun owners — may view buyback programs as punitive or distrustful, potentially undermining relationships with law enforcement. Funding buybacks without adequately engaging these communities and ensuring transparent goals may exacerbate mistrust rather than build cooperative public safety partnerships.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to OPPOSE HB 2061. Mahalo for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully,

Nico Cartagena

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 9:39:54 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Harper	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I am opposed to any more gun control laws they have proved to be usless, criminals could care less about laws so why have more, its time you start putting the criminals in jail for good and leave the rest of us alone, with over 20k gun controls on the books now do you really think this law will stop anything ?

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:05:22 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lekeli Watanabe	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I strongly oppose HB2061. The gun buyback program is a waste of state taxpayer monies. This program does not have criminals turning in their guns. It is a waste of time.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:05:48 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean J deMello	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

i am opposing this bill because i don't believe my tax dollars should be used for this.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:12:38 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah-Lyn Lokelani Jacobson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill as it goes against my 2nd ammendment right.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 10:48:59 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Terry	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

**Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2061**

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to HB 2061.

HB 2061 proposes allocating public funding for firearm buyback programs, requiring at least 2 buyback events per county.

While these programs are presented as public safety measures intended to reduce gun violence, there is limited empirical evidence demonstrating that gun buyback initiatives produce measurable or lasting reductions in crime.

- Numerous studies conducted across the country have found that gun buyback programs typically remove firearms that are older, non-operational, or already unlikely to be used in criminal activity.
- As a result, these programs tend to have little impact on violent crime rates while consuming public resources that could otherwise be directed toward strategies with demonstrated effectiveness.

From a constitutional standpoint, public policy related to public safety should be grounded in evidence-based outcomes and careful stewardship of taxpayer funds. Programs that do not meaningfully reduce crime or enhance community safety raise concerns about whether limited resources are being used in a manner consistent with both constitutional responsibility and public trust.

This concern is especially significant when viewed through Hawaii's historical and cultural perspective. Decisions affecting the well-being of the people were guided by practicality, balance, and an understanding of what truly contributed to safety and harmony. Public resources were not expended on symbolic actions, but on solutions that served the long-term needs of the community.

Gun buyback programs may offer the appearance of action, but without clear evidence of effectiveness, they risk diverting attention and funding away from initiatives that address the root causes of violence, support prevention, and strengthen community resilience. Public safety is best advanced through strategies that are data-driven, targeted, and demonstrably effective.

For these reasons, I respectfully oppose HB 2061 and urge lawmakers to consider whether the proposed funding aligns with evidence-based public safety practices, Hawaii's cultural values of responsible stewardship, and the most effective use of limited public resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

John Terry

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:13:00 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Benel Piros	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose due to that giving a Law ABIDING Citizen a fraction back of the true value of a forfeited legal firearm is unacceptable.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:36:00 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Lono	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I respectfully *oppose* HB2061. This measure would impose additional burdens on individuals and families without sufficient evidence that it will produce meaningful or equitable benefits. Given the already high cost of living in Hawai‘i, policies that risk unintended consequences should be carefully reconsidered. I urge the Legislature to reject HB2061 and instead pursue alternatives that are transparent, balanced, and in the best interests of the people of Hawai‘i.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:41:46 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raymond Ishii	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose HB2061 as written.

in this time of shrinking tax collection and reduced federal money coming into the state.

I oppose any increased spending by the state that does not meet the basic function of government.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 11:49:16 AM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elijah Kim	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

You cannot "buy back" what the government does not own. Also, individuals typically receive only \$100 to \$150 per firearm, the actual cost to taxpayers often exceeds \$500 per firearm once administrative and operational expenses are included.

These funds would be better used for public education on legal firearm transfer or disposal through licensed dealers, or through a self-funded buyback model in which firearms are lawfully resold rather than destroyed.

Stop wasting our tax money on ripping off the citizens twice: first buy only giving them \$100 to \$150 in gift cards. And using our hard earned tax money on these programs. Especially when legislators have gone on record and media saying that funding is short or tight.

Each law maker swore an oath to our constitution. Plead uphold your oath and stand with the second amendment, as much as you stand with the other amendments.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:04:51 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Roldan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

My name is Nathan Roldan. I strongly **oppose** this bill. Past gun buyback programs only encouraged people to take advantage of the situation and make fake guns to get free gift cards. Criminals do not utilize gun buyback programs. This is a waste of taxpayer money.

In summary, I strongly **oppose** this bill.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:17:53 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kamakani de dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill!!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:19:51 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mallory De Dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill!!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:21:38 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverley Brand	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Mr Tarnas et al,  
I strongly support HB 2061  
Mahalo, Beverley Brand

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:22:50 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Dedely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

I oppose this bill!!

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:45:32 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marlon Calventas	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose this bill.

I oppose this measure because I don't support spending public money on something that looks productive but doesn't solve the real problem. Gun buybacks are voluntary. The people who show up are usually law-abiding residents turning in old, unwanted, broken, or inherited firearms—the kind that were already sitting in a drawer, not the kind showing up in robberies or assaults. Meanwhile, criminals don't line up for gift cards. They don't follow rules, and this program doesn't change that.

So what are we paying for? We're paying for events, staffing, logistics, marketing, and gift cards—without a clear way to prove we actually prevented harm. Collecting a big pile of firearms makes a nice headline, but a headline isn't a result. And when the program even counts replicas or nonfunctional items, it's hard to justify it as a serious safety strategy.

If we're serious about reducing violence and suicide, we should invest in what actually moves the needle: enforcement against violent offenders, better access to mental health and crisis response, and practical safe-storage support that reaches families before a situation breaks. A buyback is time and money spent on the easiest part—taking credit for compliance—while the major issues stay right where they are.

That's why I oppose and do not support this bill.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:50:18 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MICHAEL ING	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:16:05 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
nahoa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Aloha Chair and Members,

I am writing as a Hawai‘i resident, parent, and taxpayer to respectfully oppose HB2061.

I appreciate the Legislature’s intent to reduce violence and promote safe firearm storage. However, the findings cited in HB2061 do not demonstrate that taxpayer-funded firearm buyback programs achieve these goals in a measurable or cost-effective manner.

The bill notes that recent buyback events collected hundreds of firearms in exchange for gift cards, including older firearms, replica guns, and voluntarily surrendered items. While these numbers reflect participation, they do not establish a causal link between buyback programs and reductions in firearms-related assaults, suicides, or accidents involving children. Participation alone does not indicate that firearms most likely to be used in criminal activity are being removed from circulation.

Gun buyback programs rely on voluntary and anonymous participation, which by definition primarily attracts individuals who are already inclined to comply with the law. Individuals engaged in violent crime, illegal trafficking, or repeat offenses are unlikely to surrender operable firearms for modest incentives. As a result, these programs tend to function as disposal events rather than targeted violence-prevention strategies.

HB2061 proposes the use of general fund revenues for recurring buyback events in each county. At a time when Hawai‘i faces significant needs in housing stability, mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and community-based violence prevention, it is important that public safety funds be directed toward interventions with demonstrated effectiveness.

I respectfully urge the Legislature to reconsider this appropriation and to prioritize evidence-based strategies that directly address violent behavior and root causes of harm, rather than programs that are largely symbolic and whose public safety impact remains uncertain.

Mahalo for your time, thoughtful consideration, and service to our communities.

Respectfully,  
Nahoa Laurito



**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:34:21 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Martin Wyand	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

This gun buy back program is ridiculous. Offering \$100 for guns worth \$500. No criminals are turning in their guns.

it is basically a taxpayer funded gun confiscation program.

Use that money to go after criminals with unregistered guns.

This program should never be funded.

Vote no.

**HB-2061**

Submitted on: 2/4/2026 1:46:36 PM  
Testimony for JHA on 2/5/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey King	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Taxpayer dollars should not be used by the government to buy guns from citizens. People need guns to protect themselves and their families from criminals and tyranny.