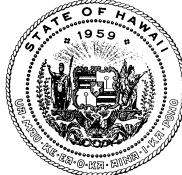


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'ĀINA O KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'



KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELA

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO  
P.O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 2454  
RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN H. WOODSON, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Hearing Date: February 12, 2026  
2:00 PM

Room Number: Conference Room 309  
and Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for fiscal implications of implementation.
- 2
- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH provides comments on the public health impacts of House Bill 2454 (H.B. 2454) which clarifies eligibility and improves accountability for the use of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funds, repeals the position of SRTS program coordinator and certain requirements for county programs. This measure seeks to amend HRS 291C-3, which established a SRTS program within DOT and assigned oversight and management of this program to a SRTS Advisory Committee.
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9 **Department Testimony:** The DOH has been an active participant on the SRTS Advisory Committee since its inception and initial meetings in 2024. Since then, the SRTS Advisory Committee has made significant progress on many of the mandated tasks including establishing transparent protocols and mechanisms to support county-level implementation of SRTS improvement projects with transportation equity at the forefront of consideration, identifying key and parameters and engaging in researching the best practices and benefits of SRTS programs. One key finding was the value of establishing and funding a network of county and state SRTS dedicated staff. Recommendations were developed for encumbering existing SRTS
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16

1 funds, a basic project evaluation matrix was developed and piloted, and recommendations were  
2 made on the distribution of funds. Changes to streamline and facilitate efforts by communities  
3 to apply for and implement projects were also identified. Additional progress updates can be  
4 found in the SRTS Advisory Committee Annual Report to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Hawaii State Legislature.<sup>1</sup>

5 The DOH has found collaboration and partnership with the DOT SRTS Coordinator to be  
6 essential when planning and supporting SRTS projects and programs. It will be important to  
7 continue this collaboration with the DOT to advance Hawaii's SRTS and Vision Zero objectives.  
8 The DOH therefore requests reconsideration of no longer requiring the participatory process  
9 with representation from all counties, public health, and other stakeholders.

10 **Offered Amendments:** None

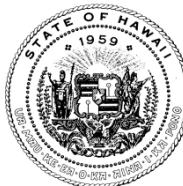
11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sniffen Director E, Ho'okele K, Hope N, et al. *STATE of HAWAII / KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION / KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU 869 PUNCHBOWL STREET HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097*. Accessed February 11, 2026. <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors  
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele  
DREANALEE K. KALILI  
TAMMY L. LEE  
CURT T. OTAGURO  
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

Thursday, February 12, 2026  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, 430

**HB2454  
RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

**House Committee on Education**

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is in strong support of House Bill 2454, relating to the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, and respectfully requests the following amendments in Ramseyer format to clarify program administration, funding timelines, and advisory committee composition.

This measure represents an important step in strengthening the administration, accountability, and effectiveness of the Safe Routes to School Program under section 291C-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The DOT supports clarifying eligibility and improving the structure of fund allocation to ensure that SRTS resources are used efficiently and aligned with project delivery timelines.

To ensure clear statutory authority for implementation, the DOT requests that Section 2, Paragraph 3 be amended in Ramseyer format to read as follows:

"(b) The department of transportation shall administer the safe routes to school program and may plan, design, construct, implement, and administer eligible safe routes to school projects that serve the purposes stated in subsection (a). For purposes of this section, eligible safe routes to school projects may be undertaken by the department of transportation, a county, or in partnership with other public agencies or schools. The department of transportation may expend funds from the safe routes to school program special fund to implement this section including staff labor and non-labor expenses, and the central services assessment required by section 36-27. For eligible safe routes to school projects undertaken by a county, the department of transportation may transfer funds from the safe routes to school program special fund to the county for the county to plan, design, construct, implement, and administer the project."

This amendment clarifies the department's authority to directly deliver projects, partner with counties and other entities, expend program funds for administrative and implementation costs, and transfer funds to counties when appropriate.

The DOT further requests that Section 2, Paragraph 4 be amended to clarify the meaning of “obligation” of funds and to better align state and federal timelines:

~~“(c) [Any safe routes to school funds allocated to a county shall be obligated within two years of the date of allocation and expended within four years of obligation,] Any funds from the safe routes to school program special fund allocated to a county to serve as matching funds for a federal-aid project shall have the corresponding federal funds obligated no later than two years after the date on which the department of transportation initially transferred the matching funds to the county for the project. Any project undertaken by a county for which funds are allocated from the safe routes to school program special fund shall complete expending these funds within four years from the date on which the department of transportation initially transferred funds for the project, or for federal-aid projects, within four years from the date federal funds were initially obligated, unless the department of transportation grants an extension for good cause shown.”~~

This revision addresses ambiguity regarding when state funds are considered “obligated,” particularly when not directly serving as federal match, and ensures accountability while recognizing the practical realities of federal-aid project delivery.

The DOT remains committed to improving pedestrian and bicycle safety for children traveling to and from school. House Bill 2454, as amended above, will provide clearer administrative authority, stronger fiscal accountability, and improved governance of the Safe Routes to School Program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure, as amended.

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

KA 'OIHANA LAWE LAWE 'OHUA

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

711 KAPI'OLANI BOULEVARD, SUITE 1600 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
Phone: (808) 768-8305 • Fax: (808) 768-4730 • Website: [honolulu.gov/transportation](http://honolulu.gov/transportation)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



J. ROGER MORTON  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O

HONGLONG LI, Ph.D., P.E.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON  
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
**Thursday, February 12, 2026, 2:00 PM**  
**Conference RM 309 and Via Videoconference**

TO: Rep. Justin H. Woodson, Chair, Rep. Trish La Chica, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Education

RE: COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL 2454, RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee on Education. My name is J. Roger Morton, and I serve as the Director of the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) for the City and County of Honolulu (City).

DTS respectfully submits this testimony with comments on HB 2454 which proposes to clarify eligibility and improve accountability for the use of Safe Routes to School funds.

DTS is excited about the potential of the Safe Routes to School Fund to fill a critical funding gap for improving safety on county roadways near Oahu schools. The first round of funds will support new sidewalks, quick-build crossing improvements, Safe Routes to School Program expenses, lowering speed limits in school zones, and other efforts that will make it safer for our keiki to travel to and from school each day. Without this funding source, these investments will be seriously delayed or never come to fruition.

DTS notes, however, that if funding deadlines must be imposed, it is respectfully requested that the timelines be lengthened. While the two- and four-year timelines may be reasonable for many projects and related program expenses, larger projects can take longer than this due to complicated legal agreements, procurement processes (especially for federal-aid projects), the need for additional community outreach, or other reasons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify with comments.



ADDRESS  
3442 Wai'ale Ave., Suite 1  
Honolulu, HI 96816

PHONE  
808-735-5756

EMAIL  
bicycle@hbl.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Thursday - February 12, 2026 - 2:00pm

**Hawai'i Bicycling League OPPOSES HB2453, Relating to Safe Routes to School**

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Committee,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez and I am the Advocacy Director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

HBL **opposes HB2453** which aims to amend [Act 244](#) which was enacted in July 2023 when the legislature sent HB 600, HD1, SD2, CD2 to the Governor. That year, HBL joined with dozens of government agencies, health care organizations, law enforcement, planning groups, and others to revamp a dormant Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. The legislature found then that it was "impractical to distribute SRTS special funds for program objectives on an annual basis because the SRTS program is a year-round program that requires regular collaboration between the State, counties, and community stakeholders to develop and implement programming and projects year-round." The lack of a regular process and procedure has led to SRTS program special fund monies not being distributed, disrupting a previously reliable source of funding that communities and counties relied on for safe routes to school programming and project development.

While the legislature transferred this authority to the SRTS Advisory Committee based on broad support from the community, policymakers and key stakeholders in 2023, the Committee did not convene until 2024, when all members were finally seated. There simply has not been enough time to reasonably evaluate their effectiveness, nor transfer authority away from this Committee, composed largely of volunteer community members, who bring decades of lived experience in active transportation, public health, and sustainability spaces.

We urge you to stay the course and learn more about the ways the SRTS Advisory Committee is engaging the community and ensuring that funds are appropriately spent. Shifting responsibilities as proposed in HB2454 can impede progress that has been made and demoralize everyone that worked so hard to get this program where it is today, poised to deliver on a community-led initiative for safer routes to schools.

S/Eduardo Hernandez

**Eduardo Hernandez**

Advocacy Director

Hawai'i Bicycling League



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
866-295-7282 | [aarp.org/hi](http://aarp.org/hi) | [hiaarp@aarp.org](mailto:hiaarp@aarp.org) |  
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://Twitter.com/aarphawaii) | [facebook.com/aarphawaii](https://facebook.com/aarphawaii)

**The State Legislature  
The House Committee on Education  
Thursday, February 12, 2026  
Conference Room 309, 2:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Justin Woodson, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director  
RE: **Opposition for H.B. 2454- RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Aloha Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people fifty and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families: health and financial security, and personal fulfillment. On behalf of our 135,000 members in Hawai'i, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

AARP Hawai'i respectfully opposes HB2454, which would weaken key components of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) framework established under Act 244 (2023). Safe, walkable communities benefit not only children but also Hawai'i's kūpuna, many of whom regularly escort grandchildren to and from school or walk through the same neighborhoods. Strong SRTS programs improve pedestrian safety for all ages and help create age-friendly communities. AARP has the following concerns about HB 2454:

**1. Loss of Statewide Coordination**

The bill removes the SRTS Program Coordinator. This position is essential for statewide consistency, technical assistance, and inter-agency leadership—functions shown to support effective SRTS programs.

**2. Reduced Community Engagement**

HB2454 repeals language supporting community workshops and non-infrastructure activities. These elements ensure that projects reflect the real safety needs of local schools and neighborhoods and are central to successful SRTS implementation.

**3. Diminished Oversight and Transparency**

By eliminating the advisory committee's role in oversight and funding recommendations, HB2454 reduces accountability and removes community-informed guidance intended by Act 244.

**4. Unclear Use of Funds**

The bill omits prior statutory language ensuring balance between infrastructure projects and education or public awareness activities that are vital to child safety and behavior change.

While strengthening accountability is important, HB2454 removes the very elements—coordination, community engagement, balanced activities, and transparent oversight—that make SRTS effective for keiki and kūpuna alike. AARP Hawai'i respectfully requests the Legislature to oppose HB2454 as currently drafted. A more balanced approach might include stronger financial oversight mechanisms without dismantling positions and community-based strategies that have been foundational to SRTS success in Hawai'i and elsewhere.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Thursday, February 12, 2026 — 2:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative respectfully opposes HB 2454, Relating to Safe Routes to School.**

Dear Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai‘i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono respectfully opposes HB 2454**, which clarifies eligibility and improves accountability for the use of Safe Routes to School funds; repeals the position of safe routes to school program coordinator; repeals certain requirements for county programs.

Following a year marked by historically high traffic fatalities and injuries, we need to strengthen — not weaken — our ability to meet keiki’s transportation safety needs. The State’s Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program plays an important and uniquely positioned role in addressing these issues at the school level, and it is unclear whether the proposed legislation preserves that capacity.

When fully engaged and enabled, the SRTS Program:

- **Keeps our keiki safe.** Safe routes to school address traffic dangers and improves safety for students, resulting in a 44–75% decline in pedestrian injury in SRTS school zones.
- **Supports learning and attendance.** Lack of transportation can be a barrier to getting to school on time or at all, especially for students in disadvantaged communities. Studies suggest improved attendance rates of up to 2% at participating schools.
- **Promotes health and physical activity.** Studies have shown an increase in walking and biking to school through safe routes to school and programs anywhere from 18% to 37%, depending on the projects implemented. For each year of SRTS Programs, walking and bicycling increase by 5%. Studies have shown children who walk to school have higher levels of physical activity throughout the day.

- **Reduces transportation cost for families.** Safe routes to school provide low-cost options for students to get to and from school, reducing the amount of money needed for personal vehicle use and busing.
- **Helps all of us, from keiki to kūpuna, to stay safe and thrive.** Previous committee work estimated that 77% of all Hawai‘i residents live within one mile of a school; and of particular note, 87% of O‘ahu residents live within that same 1-mile buffer.<sup>1</sup>

Act 244, SLH 2023, which established the new framework for a Hawai‘i safe routes to school program, was enacted in direct response to “decades of automobile-centric planning and development have created formidable safety barriers for keiki and kūpuna on our roads, such as lack of complete, safe, and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian networks; burdensome and complicated funding mechanisms for safe routes to school programs and community engagement; absence of a state safe routes to school plan that creates performance measures, goals, strategies, and accountability; and limited coordinated safe routes to school promotion among state and county agencies and community-based organizations.” This important piece of legislation was enacted “to prioritize the safety of keiki by fixing and simplifying the safe routes to schools (SRTS) program, re-engaging community stakeholders, and appropriating funds to move priority projects and save lives...”<sup>2</sup>

In response to this legislative mandate, the SRTS Advisory Committee has been working **diligently** since its authorized inception in July 2024, as documented in its annual reports to the Legislature.<sup>3</sup> The statute directs the State to develop a plan and create dedicated state and county capacity for focusing on community-centered, neighborhood-based transportation needs. To advance this work, the Advisory Committee has achieved the following:

- Approved funding for a consultant to help the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT) develop the full statewide program that meets the requirements of Act 244 with:
  - Goals, strategies, and metrics that ensure accountability;
  - Methods to ensure stability and consistency of the SRTS program fund for both infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects;
  - Recommendations to streamline and facilitate efforts by communities to apply for and implement projects; and
  - Identification of, and recommendations for, additional funding, planning, and programming that are inclusive and equitable.

<sup>1</sup> [https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2026\\_accessible-v2.pdf](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC_Annual_Report_2026_accessible-v2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

[https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2026\\_accessible-v2.pdf](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC_Annual_Report_2026_accessible-v2.pdf)

- Pre-approved funding requests for SRTS coordinators to implement this work on the ground, including one scheduled for consideration late this month for the HDOT's SRTS coordinator position.
- Approved \$12 million in SRTS projects across the state this past summer, serving over 5,600 students and their families.<sup>4</sup>

We appreciate the bill's aim to streamline grant processes and improve timely deployment of SRTS funds to the counties, which is necessary given cross-jurisdictional elements of our roadway system. That said, the existing structure of the SRTS Program and Advisory Committee was designed not only to move funds, but to build capacity, ensure meaningful community input, and provide transparency and accountability in how projects are identified and funded. The Advisory Committee has made great progress in building a formal mechanism for state-county collaboration and transparent reporting. As drafted, it is unclear how those governance functions will be preserved if dedicated support and advisory capacity are reduced or eliminated.

We therefore respectfully request clarification to ensure that, alongside improved efficiency, the program continues to uphold its commitments to community and transparent oversight. For example:

- **If the SRTS coordinator position is eliminated** — how does the Advisory Committee interface with HDOT going forward? How is this reconciled with a pending request from HDOT to the Advisory Committee to fund such a position? Where will support for the Advisory Committee be housed?
- **Unclear eligible activities** — Act 244 was very clear about the investment in the SRTS program and system, including infrastructure and non-infrastructure work. Are funds eligible for this work? In addition, there is nothing that defines the project as being walk and bike projects for schools within a certain distance.
- **Deletion of the Committee's role with oversight and funding recommendation authority** — one of the key components of the original bill was to demonstrate transparency and accountability about these projects. Each one approved for funding was evaluated by Committee members for SRTS eligibility, funding match, equity concerns, local community support. These are only in place because the Advisory Committee prioritized them based on its understanding of legislative intent and the fuller framework. Will these continue into the future?
- **Maintenance of the SRTS program without any resources** — Currently, we believe that HDOT is procuring services to help develop the plan but also provide Advisory Committee support. As an all-volunteer committee, many of the members have stepped up to evaluate projects, draft the reports to legislature, draft and finalize minutes, but these are not sustainable as long-term activities. In the proposed version of HB 2454, it is not clear that these activities would be supported by HDOT or its consultant if the bill passes.

---

<sup>4</sup> [https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2026\\_accessible-v2.pdf](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC_Annual_Report_2026_accessible-v2.pdf)



While we appreciate that the bill is considering much-needed, streamlined transportation projects, our concerns remain for ensuring that the State's SRTS efforts develop into a robust, community-driven program.

We respectfully urge the Committee to preserve the governance, coordination, and accountability framework established in Act 244, SLH 2023, while pursuing appropriate efficiencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and share our concerns.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Vice President of Government Affairs



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: [bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com) • WEB SITE: [www.getfitkauai.com](http://www.getfitkauai.com)

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 2 pm

### Get Fit Kauai Strongly Opposes HB 2454 – Relating to Safe Routes to School

---

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the Education Committee,

My name is **Bev Brody**, and I am writing on behalf of **Get Fit Kaua'i**, the **Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) coalition for Kauai County**, representing **over 1000 members** from government agencies, schools, nonprofits, healthcare, and community organizations across the island.

On behalf of our coalition, I am submitting testimony in **strong opposition** to the proposed amendments to Hawai'i Revised Statutes §291C-3 relating to the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program.

We fully support accountability, transparency, and timely use of public funds. However, this bill goes far beyond accountability and instead **weakens the core purpose, structure, and effectiveness of Safe Routes to School**, a program that directly impacts the safety and health of our keiki.

#### **1. The bill removes the fundamental purpose of Safe Routes to School**

The current statute clearly states that SRTS exists to:

- enhance traffic safety around schools
- enable and encourage children to walk and bike
- make these options safer and more appealing

The proposed language deletes all of this and replaces it with a single word: "**safely.**" This erases the vision and values that guide the program and reduces SRTS to a vague, undefined concept.

**Safe Routes to School is not simply a construction fund.**

It is a **comprehensive safety and health initiative** grounded in national best practices.

#### **2. The bill eliminates statewide and county coordination roles**

The proposal removes:

- the statewide SRTS coordinator
- county coordinators
- requirements for training, school engagement, and community involvement



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: [bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com) • WEB SITE: [www.getfitkauai.com](http://www.getfitkauai.com)

These roles are essential for:

- helping schools navigate procurement
- supporting community-driven projects
- ensuring equity across islands
- coordinating education and encouragement programs

Without coordination, counties are left without the support needed to deliver effective, timely projects.

### **3. The bill strips out non-infrastructure programming**

The proposal deletes all references to:

- education
- encouragement
- public awareness
- student safety training
- community workshops

These activities are part of the nationally recognized **6 E's of Safe Routes to School** and are often the most cost-effective tools for reducing injuries and changing behavior.

Infrastructure alone cannot create a culture of safety.

### **4. The bill reduces transparency by eliminating county reporting**

Current law requires **each county** to report annually on:

- projects
- expenditures
- progress
- future plans

The proposed bill removes this requirement and shifts reporting solely to the advisory committee.

If the goal is accountability, eliminating county reporting undermines that goal.



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: [bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com) • WEB SITE: [www.getfitkauai.com](http://www.getfitkauai.com)

## **5. Accountability can be strengthened without dismantling the program**

We support:

- clear timelines for obligation and expenditure
- reversion of unused funds
- streamlined processes
- improved oversight

These improvements can be made **without removing the purpose, structure, and community-based elements** that make Safe Routes to School effective.

A more balanced approach would preserve the program's mission while adding the accountability measures the Legislature seeks.

**For these reasons, Get Fit Kauai respectfully urges the Committee to HOLD this measure.**

Our coalition is deeply committed to the safety and well-being of Kauai's children. We ask the Legislature to protect and strengthen Safe Routes to School — not weaken it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to Hawai'i's keiki.

Respectfully,

*B Brody*

**Bev Brody**

**Get Fit Kauai – Director**

H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating Active Living)

Community Coalition of Kauai County

(808) 212-4765



**Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice**  
**Comments on HB2454 - Relating to Safe Routes to School**  
**House Committee on Education (EDN)**  
**Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 2:00PM**

---

Dear Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and members of the EDN committee, Mahalo for the opportunity to provide **COMMENTS for HB2454**, which would clarify eligibility for use of Safe Routes to School special funds, repeal the position of safe routes to school program coordinator, and repeal certain requirements for county programs.

### **Importance of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program**

There is an urgent need to improve the safety of vulnerable roadway users in Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, there were 102 traffic fatalities statewide and a staggering 42% of those fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists. Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 49% of pedestrian fatalities on O'ahu occurred on state-owned roadways. Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries are also growing. For example, the average annual number of statewide pedestrian fatalities rose by 26 percent during the 2014–2018 time period, when compared to the 2009–2013 time period.

At the same time the Navahine agreement mandates that Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded. Implementing the state's share of bike facilities on O'ahu alone will cost \$168 million.

The SRTS special fund is one of the only state funding sources dedicated to facilitating pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, which is critical for improving roadway safety while also meeting the state's climate mandates. The SRTS program functions and responsibilities was last amended under Act 244 (2023), the purposes of which were to:

- 1) Enhance the SRTS program by developing strategies and facilitating transportation-related projects that will ensure that keiki are able to safely walk, bike, or roll to common destinations through the Vision Zero policy adopted by the department of transportation and county transportation departments;
- 2) Establish a safe routes to school advisory committee of government and community stakeholders to advise the State in carrying out the purposes of the SRTS program;
- 3) Authorize the SRTS advisory committee to develop an applications process for projects under the safe routes to school program and determine awards for selected projects; and

- 4) Appropriate funds for priority projects that will improve safety and allow keiki and their families to safely walk, bike, or roll to school.<sup>1</sup>

### **Concerns for Proposed Changes to the SRTS Program**

As currently proposed, HB2454 would make substantial changes to the SRTS program, including:

- Eliminating HDOT's SRTS coordinator position.
- Creating unclarity regarding the role of county staff and programs in the SRTS program.
- Removing the SRTS Advisory Committee's role in regards to funding recommendations and oversight.

While we understand the HB2454's intent to improve the accountability of SRTS funds, we fear that the proposed changes would have the opposite effect. As currently proposed, HB2454 ignores the original intent of Act 244 (2023), which was to not only facilitate the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects near schools, but to also build a comprehensive SRTS plan that identifies projects and programs across Hawai'i that prioritize keiki travel in a more transparent and accountable way. While HB2454 maintains the SRTS program, it strips it of important resources (coordinator, advisory committee functions, etc.) needed to fulfill the ultimate vision of the SRTS program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Abbey Seitz

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice  
Director of Transportation Equity

*Disclosure:* The individual submitting these comments currently serves as the chair of the SRTS Advisory Committee. However, the comments submitted in the document are on behalf of Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, not the SRTS Advisory Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2023/SLH2023\\_Act244.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2023/SLH2023_Act244.pdf)

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:20:21 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2454 HB RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 12:46:00 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

**Comments:**

Writing in opposition to this bill. Mahalo.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 1:34:43 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

**Comments:**

I am writing to express my strong opposition to H.B. 2454. I am concerned that this bill represents a significant step backward for the safety of Hawaii's keiki. By eliminating the State Safe Routes to School (SRTS) coordinator position, as without a dedicated program coordinator, working in conjunction with the state county SRTS Coordinators to manage compliance, provide technical expertise to schools, and ensure cohesive implementation across our island communities, the program loses the critical programmatic expertise, advocacy and oversight necessary to succeed.

Furthermore, HB2454 creates a troubling lack of clarity regarding eligible activities. The language surrounding non-infrastructure projects, staffing, and eligibility for community groups is too vague to be effective. This ambiguity, coupled with the omission of the Committee's oversight and funding recommendation authority, removes the very transparency and accountability that the public expects. The DOT cannot maintain a program in name only while simultaneously stripping away the resources required for its advisory role. An advisory body without administrative support and the power to fiscally identify projects of high need is a body that cannot function.

Ultimately, this measure ignores the original intent of Act 244 (2023). The goal of Act 244 was to ensure that keiki travel is prioritized through a comprehensive system, not just through isolated projects within a one-mile radius of a school. The State has only begun to realize the full health, environmental, and safety benefits of Safe Routes to School when we treat it as a holistic program that integrates education and community engagement with physical infrastructure. I urge you to defer this bill and instead uphold the commitments made for the safety of Hawaii's keiki in Act 244.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 4:43:07 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Representative Woodson, Representative Chica and Committee Members,

I oppose HB2454 Which states that it will clarify eligibility and improve accountability for the use of Safe Routes to School funds. Repeals the position of safe routes to school program coordinator. Repeals certain requirements for county programs.

After reading the bill it seems to me that this weakens accountability and it does not really clarify anything. If there is no Safe Routes to School Coordinator at whose desk will accountable decision making be done at. This bill will also remove any real input from the Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee and leave all decision making of funds allocation up to the HDOT.

Best Regards,

John Rogers

Ewa NB #23 Transportation Committee Co-chair

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 7:12:47 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deanna Espinas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support this measure which provides kei to safely walk and bike to school

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:20:02 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Larry Veray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Totally in support of this HB2454

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 10:46:22 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Safe routes to schools enable exercise and reduce pollution.

Please pass.

Daniel C. Smith

Pearl City

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:33:41 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Meehan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB 2454 shows fiscal responsibility and a focus on providing safe routes for children biking and walking to school. Please support HB 2454. Thank you

Ted Meehan

February 12, 2026

Trevor Nagamine  
PO Box 37966  
Honolulu, HI 96837  
tnagamine.nb25@gmail.com

Rep. Justin Woodson, Chair  
House Committee on Education  
Hawai'i House of Representatives  
415 S. Beretania St. Rm. 405  
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB2454 — RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Dear Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Trevor Nagamine, and I am a resident of Mililani. I am also a member of Neighborhood Board No. 25 (Mililani/Waipio/Melemanu); however, I am submitting this testimony as an individual, and this testimony does not reflect an official position of Neighborhood Board No. 25. I am writing today to oppose HB2454.

HB2454 would, among other things, eliminate the State's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) coordinator and delete various statutory requirements for the SRTS program. This bill would make it harder to deliver SRTS projects that require cooperation from the counties, and reduce transparency in the allocation of SRTS funds.

I respectfully ask that the committee defer HB2454. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Mahalo,

Trevor Nagamine

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 6:34:02 AM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gaius	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Gaius Dupio am in full support of safer sidewalks, clean and clear walkways to and from school and possibly school bike lanes

LATE \*Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

**HB-2454**

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 12:38:18 PM  
Testimony for EDN on 2/12/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.