



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 2520, S.D. 1, RELATING TO HABITUAL VIOLENT CRIME.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

DATE: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 **TIME:** 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 016

TESTIFIER(S): **WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY.**
(For more information, contact Mark S. Tom,
Deputy Attorney General, at (808) 586-1160)

Chair Rhoads and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) strongly supports this bill.

Act 213, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, established the offense of habitual violent crimes, codified as section 707-712.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and provided for the repeal of that section on June 30, 2027. This bill would repeal the sunset date and require the Criminal Justice Research Institute to submit a one-time report to the Legislature before the 2031 Regular Session. The bill would also require the Attorney General to continue submitting annual reports to the Legislature on the effectiveness of section 707-712.2, HRS. These changes allow additional time to evaluate the statute's effectiveness, recognizing the time required for cases to progress through the criminal justice system.

This bill was submitted by unanimous agreement of the Hawaii Law Enforcement Coalition (LEC), whose membership includes the Attorney General, the Chief of Police and Prosecutor of each county, and the Director of Law Enforcement.

The Department respectfully requests the passage of this bill.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO HO'OPI'I
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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**THE HONORABLE KARL RHOADS, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawai'i**

February 24, 2026

REGARDING S.B. 2520, S.D.1; RELATING TO HABITUAL VIOLENT CRIME.

Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu (“Department”) submits the following testimony in **strong support** of S.B.2520, S.D.1.

As prosecutors, we witness firsthand the devastating impact of repeat violent offenders on our communities. Act 213 (2024) was an essential step to addressing habitual violent crime, including sexual assault, domestic violence, and assaults against police officers. But the statute’s approaching sunset provision threatens to prematurely end this important tool before we can properly assess its effectiveness.

The habitual violent crime statute targets a narrow category of serious repeat offenders: those who have three or more violent crime convictions within five years. This is not a broad net, but rather a focused tool for the most persistent violent criminals. In practice, the statute has been used sparingly and responsibly.

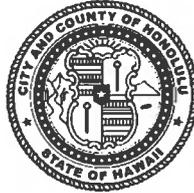
The current sunset date leaves insufficient time to evaluate Act 213’s effectiveness. First, felony cases take significant time to progress through the courts. Violent felony cases can take two years or more before trial, let alone sentencing and appeal. Second, best practices in research methodology require longitudinal data. As the bill preamble notes, experts recommend collecting five years of data to understand how a law works in practice. Third, deterrence takes time. It relies on both publicity and predictability: the law must be seen and seen to work. Two years is too short to assess this deterrent effect.

The Department fully supports the reporting requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT
KA 'OIHANA MĀKA'I O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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NA HOPE LUNA NUI MĀKA'I KŪIKAWA

OUR REFERENCE **PO-JK**

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members
Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
415 South Beretania Street, Room 016
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Members:

SUBJECT: Senate Bill No. 2520, S.D. 1, Relating to Habitual Violent Crime

I am Major Paul Okamoto of District 6 (Waikīkī) of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports Senate Bill No. 2520, S.D. 1, Relating to Habitual Violent Crime. Act 213, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024, has enabled law enforcement to protect the community from those violent offenders who habitually choose to inflict violence upon their victims. People who routinely resort to the use of physical violence to resolve conflict or victimize others are the most dangerous among us. Many times, the criminal offenders who commit the most heinous crimes have a long history of a propensity towards violence. Senate Bill No. 2520, S.D. 1, allows law enforcement to apply sufficient consequences for this antisocial behavior. Repealing the sunset date will ensure that law enforcement will continue to have the proper tools to address these crimes.

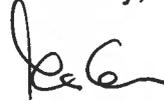
Also, statistics have shown that Act 213 has not been overly used to prosecute people, nor has it dramatically increased incarcerations. Rather, it has been used judiciously to identify those who may escalate to more violent criminal offenses and to prosecute the worst offenders.

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members
February 24, 2026
Page 2

The HPD urges you to support Senate Bill No. 2520, S.D. 1, Relating to Habitual Violent Crime.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,



Paul Okamoto, Major
District 6

APPROVED:



Rade K. Vanic
Interim Chief of Police



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

POLICE DEPARTMENT COUNTY OF KAUA'I



ELLIOTT K. KE, CHIEF OF POLICE
MARK T. OZAKI, DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
And Honorable Members of the Committee on Judiciary
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 2520 SD1, Relating to Habitual Violent Crime

Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Kaua'i Police Department, I am submitting testimony in **support of SB 2520 SD1**, which amends Act 213, Session Laws of Hawai'i 2024 (the habitual violent crime statute) by removing its sunset date, and by requiring comprehensive reporting on the law's effectiveness in reducing violent crime.

Act 213 was enacted to address habitual offenders who commit violent crimes — including sexual assault, abuse of family or household members, and assaults against law enforcement officers — by increasing the offense to a Class C felony when a person has three or more prior violent convictions within five years. However, the law is currently set to sunset, and more time is needed to fully evaluate its impact given the length of time felony cases take to travel through the criminal justice system.

SB 2520 SD1 thoughtfully extends the framework of Act 213 by repealing the sunset date, ensuring that the statute remains in effect. The bill will also require the Criminal Justice Research Institute (CJRI) to submit a one-time evaluation report prior to the 2031 Regular Session, and require annual data reporting from the Attorney General in consultation with CJRI on habitual violent crime outcomes going forward.

This reporting structure will provide the Legislature, law enforcement, and the public with valuable data on how habitual violent offender provisions are working in practice — including arrests, prosecutions, and case outcomes — which is essential to meaningful policy evaluation and informed legislative decision-making.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Committee to pass SB 2520 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Elliott K. Ke
Chief of Police
Kaua'i Police Department