

**DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES**  
**KA 'OIHANA LAWELawe KUPA**  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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March 4, 2026

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs  
State Capitol, Conference Room 325  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

SUBJECT: H.B. No. 2217, H.D. 1 - Relating To Identification  
HEARING: Thursday, March 5, 2026, 2:00 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD), offers **comments with concerns** regarding H.B. No. 2217, H.D. 1, which allows any applicants for instruction permits, provisional licenses, driver's licenses, limited purpose driver's licenses, limited purpose provisional driver's licenses, or limited purpose instruction permits, and civil identification cards to be able to add a disability notation to their identification. Pursuant to Section 6-402 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, CSD Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) administers, among other things, the motor vehicle driver licensing and state civil identification card programs for the island of O'ahu. While CSD appreciates the intent of the proposed legislation, we have concerns regarding its application and its legal implications.

CSD supports efforts to promote safer and compassionate communication for people with disabilities, but has concerns regarding the operational and financial impacts the proposed legislation will have on the City and County of Honolulu.

The proposed legislation would require modifications to CSD DMV's information technology system, CSD DMV forms, and CSD DMV internal policies and procedures.

Specifically, amendments to chapter 286, Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), would introduce new responsibilities for CSD DMV, including but not limited to:

- Implementing changes to license renewals (section 286-107, HRS), instruction permits (section 286-110, HRS), and duplicate permits, provisional licenses, licenses (section 286-117, HRS), and civil identification cards (section 286-301, HRS);
- Ensuring compliance with federal and state data privacy and security requirements; and
- Conducting staff training and public outreach to support implementation and administration of the disability notation process.

These additional responsibilities would be true statewide, as each county is responsible for administering motor vehicle driver licensing and civil identification card programs. Additionally, the proposed legislation may have unintended consequences for Hawai'i's current licensing processes and require further clarification on implementation timelines and funding support from the state.

Given these significant operational considerations, we respectfully request the Legislature provide clear guidance on funding, resources and the necessary time available for implementation. CSD DMV urges the Legislature to consider the impact on county operations and, should this matter move forward, requests a phased approach to implementation that will allow for a reasonable and adequate amount of time for the counties to research and assess implementation requirements, staffing, funding requirements, information technology and other resource impacts, necessary updated administrative procedures, staff training, and good public outreach.

With these considerations in mind, CSD appreciates the opportunity to comment on H.B. No. 2217, H.D. 1.

Sincerely,

*for* Kimberly M. Hashiro  
Director

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 9:50:01 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Louis Erteschik	Hawaii Disability Rights Center	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We certainly appreciate the intent of the bill and those in the disability community who want a mechanism to identify themselves and their needs, particularly if they encounter law enforcement. That goal makes a lot of sense since it is easy for a law enforcement officer to mistake behavior on the part of the individual with a disability for non-compliance with directions.

While we are very much in agreement with that goal we do note the concerns expressed by some of our colleagues of potential unintended consequences, as well as the availability of alternative methods of obtaining the same goals.

For that reason, if the Legislature desires to advance this measure we hope it can take steps to avoid any unintended consequences and address the concerns expressed so that in the end we can produce a bill that will solve some problems while avoiding others.

<b>TO:</b>	<b>Hawaii Legislature</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>Jess Stainbrook – Executive Director, Invisible Disabilities® Association</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>February 18, 2026</b>
<b>RE:</b>	<b>HB2217 – Disability ID Symbol</b>

**PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME:** People living with invisible disabilities are regularly discriminated against as people think they are faking or are not willing to provide accommodations as required by ADA law. Most police officers are not adequately trained to identify and communicate with people with disabilities. Over 50% of the people involved in unintended law enforcement deaths are people with invisible disabilities such as autism, IDD or other mental health illnesses or sensory needs conditions (i.e., deaf, hard of hearing, limited vision) that could be significantly reduced with this type of disability identification.

**SOLUTION:** By providing a designated symbol for a government approved ID or identifier database for vehicles, law enforcement can be made aware that someone has a disability and there can be validation that the disability is "real," diffusing possibly tense or discriminatory situations before they escalate into a tragedy.

**KEY COMPONENTS OF HB2217.** This bill provides for three main, life-changing initiatives:

1. The voluntary option to have a designated symbol on a driver's license or government ID;
2. The voluntary option to have information about a disability in a database that goes with a registered vehicle. So if you have a child that is on the spectrum, or someone that was non-verbal, that information could be available so that when a Law Enforcement Officer was looking it up, they would know before approaching the car that someone in the car might need some extra care or help.
3. This bill opens the door for certification training for law enforcement and first responders providing education about and resources for dealing with people living with invisible disabilities in the context of daily interactions.

Those in support of this bill have expressed the following:

- That having a voluntary designated and approved symbol on an ID will help identify people with disabilities in interactions with peace officers and law enforcement, something that "proves" that the disability is real even if unseen.
- This will often allow law enforcement to have information at the beginning of a contact that a person may have an intellectual, developmental, or physical disability or is neurodiverse. Law enforcement may not misinterpret indicators of a disability such as slurred speech, no eye contact, not responding to verbal commands, or overwhelm as indicia of deceptive or criminal behavior. Our hope is that this will lead to a greater understanding and reducing use of force incidents against people with disabilities.
- Having a field in the vehicle registration database, visible only to law enforcement upon query of the license plate to document that a regular driver or passenger that travels in the vehicle, has a disability that may need accommodations. This will provide piece of mind to many, including a mother concerned about what would happen if she was incapacitated in an accident and her non-verbal daughter could not communicate with first responders, a caregiver that gets pulled over with an IDD child that might react strongly if confronted by an unknown law enforcement officer, or a person driving with Cerebral Palsy whose slurred speech may be mistaken for indicia of alcohol intoxication. There are numerous examples.
- Creates the opportunity for starting a dialogue to provide new training for peace officers so they can understand how to better recognize and interact with people with disabilities or neurodiversity
- People living with invisible (and any) disabilities should have access to more equitable treatment and accommodations than are currently available.

## FAQs about Hawaii HB2217

1. Will having a symbol on an ID lead to more discrimination since the public will know what that symbol means?

RESPONSE: That is why it is voluntary. If someone feels that they may be discriminated against they do not have to participate or have the visible symbol on their driver's license or ID card. The purpose of having the approved symbol on a government ID like a driver's license is to open a positive discussion with law enforcement. Our hope is that the first question from an LE officer would be something like "How can I help provided accommodations so that this interaction will go more smoothly and less stressed for all?"

2. Will this be a path toward requiring government registration targeting people with disabilities, and subsequent discrimination against marginalized people groups like what happened in WWII?

RESPONSE: This is a voluntary registration for people that feel having these options would be helpful. There are NO mandatory registration requirements.

3. When I register, will someone be able to know what disability I have and discriminate against me as a result of that knowledge?

RESPONSE: There is no required information about a disability gathered or made available when applying and registering for these rights. You may choose to divulge as much or as little information as you would like on the license plate field available to law enforcement. The only people that would have access to the information that says you have registered is law enforcement looking up the vehicle license plate info.

NOTE: If you have a disability license plate and/or placard for disability parking, the government already has information about your disability specifically that you provided them to receive those items.

4. If I have a placard, will that help to identify that I have a disability?

RESPONSE: In a traffic stop, the officers are usually coming up from behind the car. Having the database link gives them this info before they even approach your vehicle. The placard may help, but after they have dealt with whatever the reason for them stopping you. Also, it is not uncommon for someone without a disability to be driving a car with a placard. Another good reason for registering for the database.

5. Does having this symbol on my ID or being registered in the database provide me with disability parking privileges?

RESPONSE: No, this will not provide disability parking privileges (unless you have a placard). The symbol or database registration is for the purpose of helping law enforcement know that you or someone in your car may have an invisible disability or neurodiversity that may need special care or accommodations.

For more information, contact: Jess Stainbrook, Executive Director – Invisible Disabilities® Association  
[jess@invisibledisabilities.org](mailto:jess@invisibledisabilities.org) 303-882-8256

## ----- Supporting Organizations -----

**WHAT IS AN INVISIBLE DISABILITY?** An invisible disability is a disability that cannot be seen as a result of using a visible assistive device such as a wheelchair, mobility cane, hearing aid or other device. Examples of invisible disabilities can include cognitive, mental health conditions, physical disabilities, neuro diversities, sensory needs and chronic illness/pain. That could be something like MS, Epilepsy, Diabetes, Fibromyalgia, Hard of Hearing - many conditions and illnesses are considered an invisible disability. About 80% of people with disabilities have an invisible disability according to CDC and NIH data. That's about 65 million people in the United States.

Here is a list of the supporting organizations as we passed this bill into law in Colorado and Utah:

1. Invisible Disabilities® Association	16. Neuro Equality	31. Young Invincibles
2. NAMI Colorado	17. Valideaf	32. Epilepsy Foundation of Colorado
3. Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council	18. Impact Disability Law	33. Colorado Health Network, Inc.
4. Firefly Autism	19. Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance	34. Scleroderma Foundation Rocky Mt. Chapter
5. Elevate Disability	20. Safe4All (IDD Mobile App)	35. Project Sanctuary
6. BIAC (Brain Injury Alliance Colorado)	21. Pulse Line Collaborative Training	36. National Multiple-Sclerosis Society – Colorado
7. HLA A (Hearing Loss Association of America) Boulder	22. Colorado Association of School Executives	37. LivLyme Foundation
8. Craig Hospital	23. Colorado League of Charter Schools	38. Adam Morgan Foundation
9. The ARC of Colorado	24. Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind	
10. ARC Thrift	25. Colorado Education Association	
11. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless	26. GOAL Academy	
12. Autism Society of Colorado	27. JLH Consulting and Public Affairs	
13. Anti-Defamation League Mountain States	28. Poudre School District	
14. #ME Action (Myalgic encephalomyelitis)	29. READY Colorado	
15. Lupus Colorado	30. Stand For Children, Inc.	



**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 2:51:03 PM

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

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support w/comment to include "invisible" disability such as "mental illness."

2217 HB RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 5:26:54 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hendrix Wooton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am nine and my mom is trying to help build a more inclusive life for me and this will help me and a lot of other people.

This bill is awesome you should vote for it because it supports people with hidden disabilities.

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:14:33 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Wooton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ryan Wooton and I'm writing testimony in support of HB2217 in regards to adding a non apparent disability symbol on Hawai'i State Id's. I'm a born and raised resident from the north shore of Kauai. I have a 9 year old son with High Functioning Autism that the average person would never guess he has especially if you haven't spent extended time with him. He has had problems in public schools since he seems like he is completely normal 90% of the time. Which means when he gets overwhelmed and can no longer mask he is just thought of as a bad kid when he just needs someone to understand his needs at that moment. He wasn't even diagnosed till he was 8 since he is so good at masking and was just considered to having behavioral problems when he was put into situations where he could no longer mask. He goes to ABA therapy 3 times a week to help him with regulating during this time but we still fear for his future. This simple little addition do a drivers license could be life saving for citizens with non apparent disabilities like my son. It will also help law enforcement officers understand how to communicate better with people like my son during high stress situations. There are lots of people like my son out there that have a wide variety of invisible disabilities and this would give them the option to feel more understood and able to communicate during a stressful time when interacting with law enforcement. As a life long citizen of Hawai'i I hope this is something that can be quickly added so that people with non apparent disabilities can receive a extra set of understanding with law enforcement.

Mahalo

Ryan Wooton

Anahola, Kauai, Hawai'i

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:28:57 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah wooton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

my name is Sarah and my son was diagnosed as Autistic this past April. It took us almost 9 years for someone to finally listen to us that our child was different. He is considered a high functioning so you can't tell by just looking at him. It's a neurological disability that makes him have a hard time in certain aspects of his life. He was constantly misunderstood and mistreated in a public school simply because unless you were told about his disability, he would never suspect he was different. He struggled for the early parts of his life because his behavior was seen as defiant, He was seen as undisciplined, he was constantly getting in trouble over misunderstandings because he just didn't understand. Without the understanding of his autism diagnosis, I worry in certain situations that things could escalate his dysregulation if the signs aren't recognized. That's why I feel this bill is really important. It also helps build understanding with first responders on how to better support people like my son. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Aloha,

Sarah Wooton

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 7:31:35 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:02:28 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Billy Troy Wooton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Support of H.B. 2217 HD1 – Nonapparent Disability Identification Notation

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Troy Wooton, and I am a resident of Makakilo. I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of H.B. 2217, which would allow individuals to voluntarily request a notation on their driver’s license or state identification card indicating a nonapparent disability.

While I am not an expert in this area, my nephew has autism. He is bright and capable, but like many individuals with nonapparent disabilities, he may respond differently in high-stress situations, especially during unexpected interactions such as a traffic stop or emergency response. In those moments, misunderstandings can occur quickly.

This bill offers a simple, voluntary, and no-cost option that could help first responders approach interactions with greater awareness and compassion. Importantly, it respects privacy by not requiring proof or mandating disclosure.

Providing individuals and families with this option is a practical step toward safer and more informed interactions between law enforcement and members of our community with hidden disabilities.

Mahalo for your consideration and for your commitment to the safety and well-being of Hawai‘i’s residents.

Respectfully,

Billy Troy Wooton

Upper Makakilo/Kapolei, Hawai‘i



**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 7:42:57 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Judith White	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This measure would provide a significant step toward supporting our neurodivergent population. Please pass!

Dr. Judith C. White, Kapaa

**HB-2217-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/4/2026 8:54:44 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joell Edwards	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

My name is Joëll Edwards. I am a small business owner and community advocate from Wainiha on the North Shore of Kaua‘i, and I am writing in strong support of HB2217 HD1.

This measure was brought forward by a mother here on Kaua‘i who is advocating not only for her own child, but for many others across our communities who live with disabilities that may not be immediately visible. Her advocacy reflects the lived experiences of families navigating situations where misunderstandings during high-stress encounters can have serious consequences.

This bill is a simple, voluntary, and compassionate step toward safer interactions between individuals with disabilities and law enforcement or first responders. Autism spectrum disorder, developmental disabilities, and other cognitive or neurological conditions may not be immediately apparent, yet they can significantly affect how someone responds in stressful situations such as a traffic stop or emergency.

In high-pressure encounters, misunderstandings can escalate quickly. A voluntary notation on a driver’s license or civil identification card provides a quiet, dignified way to signal that additional patience or communication adjustments may be needed. That awareness alone can prevent confusion, reduce escalation, and protect both the individual and the responding officer.

I also appreciate that this measure remains voluntary and opt-in, ensuring individuals and families can decide for themselves whether requesting the notation is appropriate for their circumstances.

In communities like mine, where resources and specialized response teams may be limited, proactive communication tools like this are especially important. HB2217 reflects thoughtful policy grounded in compassion, safety, and practicality, and it demonstrates how community voices can shape meaningful legislation.

I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair

Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

HEARING:

Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2217, HD1 - RELATING TO IDENTIFICATION.**

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, Rep. Cochran of Maui, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews and I am a long-term resident of Wailuku, Maui. I write to you today in **strong support of HB 2217**, Relating to Identification, which allows applicants for driver's permit, driver's license, or civil identification cards to request a nonapparent disability notation on their permit, license, or identification card and requires the Department of Transportation to establish public outreach efforts and coordinate with state and county law enforcement agencies regarding the disability notation.

I have nonapparent congenital physical and neurological disabilities. I am also the parent of young adult children who also have nonapparent disabilities, including one who is both hard-of-hearing and is neuroatypical. I have Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS), a genetic connective tissue disorder with a wide variety of symptoms impacting essentially every body system. There are a variety of types of EDS, and for many of us, our disability is nonapparent. I was not diagnosed with my disability until my forties, when my oldest child, who had more medically-obvious symptoms, was diagnosed. For myself, I feel that a nonapparent disability notation on my identification would be beneficial in helping ensure I get appropriate care in an emergency situation where time and information would be of the essence. I think having the notation would also be helpful in situations where people may be inclined to withhold necessary accommodations in situations where they would be beneficial or necessary.

When I think of my hard-of-hearing and neuroatypical child, I can see how a nonapparent disability notation could facilitate interactions with law enforcement in ways that would be de-escalating. Since she is hard-of-hearing, not deaf, she is sometimes not responsive to questions from others due to lack of hearing, which can be perceived by those unaware of her disability as indifference, nonresponsiveness, rudeness, confusion or altered state, etc. This could potentially cause a situation to escalate, a situation that the identification notation could help prevent.

I think that HB 2217, HD1 provides a simple, low-cost, and effective means to facilitate how people with nonapparent disabilities can interact with law enforcement, state and local agencies, and help raise awareness and inclusion. I respectfully **request your support of HB 2217, HD1.**

Mahalo,

Christine Andrews, JD  
Wailuku, Maui