



**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. 2516, RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY.

**BEFORE THE:**  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

**DATE:** Monday, February 2, 2026      **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 016

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Michelle M.L. Puu, Deputy Attorney General

---

Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Committee:

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

This bill establishes a more appropriate penalty structure for offenders who obstruct or interfere with the apprehension, prosecution, conviction, or punishment of another offender. Under existing law, this conduct is subject to a maximum penalty of a class C felony, regardless of the severity of the underlying offense. This bill would instead authorize a penalty one level below the offense of the principal offender, except in cases involving murder, where hindering prosecution would be a class A felony.

This bill was submitted with the unanimous support 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.

JON N. IKENAGA  
PUBLIC DEFENDER

**DEFENDER COUNCIL**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**HONOLULU OFFICE**  
1130 NORTH NIMITZ HIGHWAY  
SUITE A-254  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

**APPELLATE DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2080

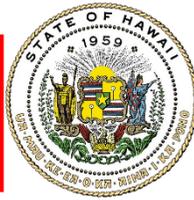
**DISTRICT COURT DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2100

**FAMILY COURT DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2300

**FELONY DIVISION**  
TEL. No. (808) 586-2200

**FACSIMILE**  
(808) 586-2222

**LATE**



STATE OF HAWAII  
**OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER**

HAYLEY Y. C. CHENG  
ASSISTANT PUBLIC DEFENDER

**HILO OFFICE**  
275 PONAHAHAWAI STREET  
SUITE 201  
HILO, HAWAII 96720  
TEL. No. (808) 974-4571  
FAX No. (808) 974-4574

**KONA OFFICE**  
75-1000 HENRY STREET  
SUITE #209  
KAILUA-KONA HI 96740  
TEL. No. (808) 327-4650  
FAX No. (808) 327-4651

**KAUAI OFFICE**  
3060 EIWA STREET  
SUITE 206  
LIHUE, HAWAII 96766  
TEL. No. (808) 241-7128  
FAX No. (808) 274-3422

**MAUI OFFICE**  
81 N. MARKET STREET  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
TEL. No. (808) 984-5018  
FAX No. (808) 984-5022

February 2, 2026

**SB2516: RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs**

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **opposes SB2516** which seeks to increase the penalties for a charge of Hindering Prosecution in the First Degree, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), § 710-1029. This measure is unnecessary as the current versions of the hindering prosecution statutes already take into consideration the scope of the underlying offense.

Under the current version of HRS § 710-1029, a person is guilty of a Class C felony if, with the intent to hinder the apprehension, prosecution, conviction, or punishment of another for a Class A, B, or C felony or murder in any degree, renders assistance to the other person.<sup>1</sup> The avowed purposes for SB2516 are to establish a structure for more appropriate penalties which take into consideration the scope of the offenses and acts in question, promote greater respect for the law, ensure offenders receive an appropriate sentence that reflects the seriousness of the offense, provide adequate deterrence for future criminal activity and better protect the public.

This measure is unnecessary as the current versions of the hindering prosecution statutes already take into account the scope or seriousness of the underlying offense. Under HRS § 710-1029, if a person hinders prosecution of a felony offense or murder, they are guilty of a Class C felony. Under HRS § 710-1030, if a person hinders prosecution of a misdemeanor or petty misdemeanor they are guilty of a

---

<sup>1</sup> "Renders assistance to another" is defined in HRS § 710-1028.

misdemeanor. Thus, the degree of hindering prosecution under the current statutory scheme already accounts for the seriousness of the underlying offense.

Persons who are charged with hindering prosecution have not participated in the underlying offense. Persons who commit hindering prosecution participate only after the crime is completed and are therefore not as blameworthy as the person who planned or executed the offense. In many cases, the persons charged with hindering prosecution are family members. Family members such as parents, children, grandparents and siblings have a nature tendency to protect their loved ones or may cohabitate with the offender. In recognition of the unique pressures faced by family members, fourteen states have exemptions from prosecution of accessory after the fact for family members, including spouses, parents, grandparents, children or grandchildren.<sup>2</sup> Family members face intense psychological pressure and the natural instinct to protect a spouse, child, parent, grandparent or grandchild which may override a legal duty to report. Family members may also be acting under threats or fear of the offender, especially in cases of domestic violence situations.<sup>3</sup> Hawai‘i has no exception for prosecution for hindering prosecution for family members. Thus, under SB2516, the mother who, acting out of natural maternal instinct, takes such limited actions as concealing, warning, or providing their child with money would be guilty of up to a Class A felony offense. Additionally, a battered spouse who, out of fear, threat of violence or psychological coercion, conceals or warns their spouse of impending discovery, apprehension, prosecution or conviction would be guilty of up to a Class A felony offense. While it may be appropriate to charge family members who hinder prosecution, it is unnecessary to do so excessively given the special circumstances that are present.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

---

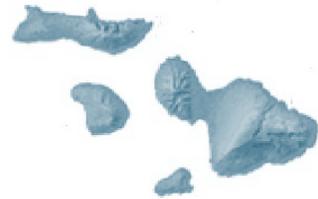
<sup>2</sup> Markel, D., et al., Privilege or Punish: Criminal Justice and the Challenge of Family Ties, Oxford University Press (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2009).

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. Faigman and Wright, “The Battered Woman Syndrome in the Age of Science,” *Arizona Law Review*, Vol. 39: 67 at 91-92 (noting that battered woman syndrome has been employed by defendants in trials for crimes committed seemingly in complicity with their abusers, but for which they claim duress).

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**ANDREW H. MARTIN**  
Prosecuting Attorney

**SHELLY C. MIYASHIRO**  
First Deputy Prosecuting Attorney



**DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAI'I 96793  
PHONE (808) 270-7777 • FAX (808) 270-7625

TESTIMONY ON  
S.B. 2516  
RELATING TO Public Safety

February 1, 2026

The Honorable Carol Fukunaga  
Chair  
The Honorable Chris Lee  
Vice Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui respectfully submits the following comments **in support of S.B. 2516, Relating to Public Safety**. This bill increases public safety by establishing a sentencing framework for the offense of Hindering Prosecution in the First Degree that is based on the level of offense hindered.

We support this bill because it provides an appropriate sentence for offenders that intentionally hinder the apprehension, prosecution, conviction or punishment of someone who commits a felony offense by providing them with assistance. This sentence is proportionate and appropriately linked to the initial felony offense committed because it is set one class or grade lower than that offense.

For these reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui **supports S.B. 2516**. Please feel free to contact our office at (808) 270-7777 if you have any questions or inquiries. Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



**JOHN PELLETIER**  
CHIEF OF POLICE

# POLICE DEPARTMENT

## COUNTY OF MAUI

55 MAHALANI STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
TELEPHONE: (808) 244-6400  
FAX: (808) 244-6411



**WADE M. MAEDA**  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

February 1, 2026

Honorable Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
Honorable Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
The Thirty-Third Legislature  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of S.B. 2516, Relating to Public Safety**

Dear Chair Fukunaga, Vice-Chair Lee, and Committee Members:

I am writing in strong support of SB 2516, which addresses a critical gap in Hawaii's criminal justice system. Currently, individuals who assist offenders after the commission of serious crimes—including providing shelter, food, transportation, or other aid—face relatively light penalties, even when the original crime involves murder or attacks on law enforcement.

Under existing law, such acts are limited to a Class C felony, carrying a maximum of just five years in prison. SB 2516 corrects this imbalance by tying the punishment for hindering prosecution to the severity of the underlying crime.

The bill makes hindering prosecution one class or grade below the original offense, and specifically elevates it to a Class A felony when the original crime is murder. This ensures that those who enable violent offenders are held appropriately accountable for their actions.

Passing this bill would close a dangerous loophole in our laws that allows people to help violent criminals with minimal consequence, strengthen deterrence, making it clear that aiding offenders after the fact is a serious crime, support law enforcement by ensuring that those who obstruct justice face real accountability, and further protect the public by holding all participants in violent criminal activity to a standard that reflects the seriousness of their conduct.

SB 2516 is a necessary reform that further promotes justice, strengthens public safety, and ensures accountability for those who assist dangerous offenders.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 2516.

Sincerely,

**JOHN PELLETIER**  
Chief of Police

**KELDEN B.A. WALTJEN**  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

**SHANNON M. KAGAWA**  
FIRST DEPUTY  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



655 KILAUEA AVENUE  
HILO, HAWAII 96720  
PH: (808) 961-0466  
FAX: (808) 961-8908

74-675 KEALAKEHE PARKWAY  
KAILUA-KONA, HAWAII 96740  
PH: (808) 322-2552  
FAX: (808) 322-6584

64-1067 MAMALAHOA HIGHWAY, C-3  
KAMUELA, HAWAII 96743  
PH: (808) 887-3017  
FAX: (808) 887-3016

## OFFICE OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2516

#### A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY

#### COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair

Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair

Monday, February 2, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

Via Videoconference

State Capitol Conference Room 016

415 South Beretania Street

Honorable Chair Fukunaga, Vice-Chair Lee and Members of the Committee on Public Safety: The County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony **in strong support** of Senate Bill 2516.

SB 2516 was drafted with the intent to establish a gradient penalty structure for the offense of hindering prosecution in the first degree based on the level of the offense committed by the other person. The findings outlined in this bill reflect a critical gap in our current legal framework. Under existing law, individuals who aid others who have committed serious crimes such as murder or attempted murder often face lenient and inconsistent penalties.

Hindering prosecution in the first degree is currently classified as a class C felony. As such, an individual who "renders assistance" to another "with the intent to hinder the apprehension, prosecution, conviction, or punishment . . . for a class A, B, or C felony or murder in any degree" faces the same, maximum penalty of a five-year prison term . . . no matter what offense the other person committed. This disparity is unjust and undermines the public's confidence in our criminal justice system.

This bill correctly recognizes that rendering such assistance should be met with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crimes involved. By establishing a penalty structure that reflects the seriousness of the underlying offense, this bill will deter potential offenders from assisting criminals after the commission of a crime. It sends a clear message that those who aid others in evading justice will be held accountable, helping to break the cycle of criminal activity and reducing the likelihood of future crimes.

In recent years on Hawai'i Island, we have encountered several instances where a serious crime was committed by an offender and it resulted in an islandwide manhunt jeopardizing public safety, incurring significant financial costs, and causing unnecessary strain upon our

Island's limited resources. Most notably, was the July 2018 killing of Officer Bronson Kaliloa, who was shot and killed during a traffic stop, the March 2025 near fatal shooting of a VICE officer, who was shot while attempting to apprehend a wanted suspect, and also during March 2025, the killing of Latisha Soares, who was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend. Through criminal investigation, law enforcement would later identify individuals who assisted the suspects in these cases, providing among other things, shelter, transportation, money, disguise, and other forms of assistance. Unfortunately, as Hawai'i law fails to recognize accomplice liability after the commission of an offense, these individuals were limited to convictions under the current Hindering Prosecution in the First and Second Degree (misdemeanor) sections.

For the families of victims, affected by violent crimes, the ability to bring offenders to justice is an essential part of the healing process. Providing for appropriate penalties against those who assist offenders after a crime has been committed will serve as an important tool for ensuring that justice is fully realized and that no one is allowed to escape accountability.

Additionally, our Office would also suggest including the following provision to clarify any ambiguity associated with the offense of murder:

Hindering prosecution in the first degree is [a class C felony] an offense one class or grade, as the case may be, lower than the offense committed by the other person; provided that when the offense committed by the other person is murder in any degree hindering prosecution is a class A felony."

By amending Section 710-1029 to impose more appropriate penalties for those who hinder prosecution, this bill will promote greater respect for the law, deter future criminal activity, and ensure justice for victims and their families. We humbly request this Committee to pass this bill and send a clear message that rendering assistance to those who commit serious crimes will not be tolerated in Hawai'i. For the foregoing reasons, the County of Hawai'i, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney **strongly supports** the passage of Senate Bill 2516. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 2:41:09 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Reggee Bailey	Testifying for Honolulu Police Department	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, my name is Officer R. Bailey and I am a resident of the Waianae area and also a Police Officer with the Honolulu Police Department. This is in support of Bill SB2516, which would increase the accountability for people hindering prosecution. As a police officer, I have seen this happen multiple times where family members or friends hide known criminals or even criminals in an active investigation or case and receive no penalty for doing so. The issue has come up with officers debating whether or not we should arrest people for aiding criminals by these means but it has never been enforced due to the fact of supervisors saying that we can't or we don't have enough to make that happen, or simply because the courts won't accept it. To me in my opinion, if anyone is known to be aiding or assisting a criminal during an investigation should be charged in some manner for assisting them whether by physically preventing apprehension or detainment, or even hiding them from police. Passing this bill would show members of the public that they should not involve themselves in criminal matters that does not involve them directly even if it does include a friend or family member. They can still be free after the fact to ask questions or concerns regarding the incident but not to put themselves between a police officer and the possible suspect or suspect in the investigation. I urge the committee to vote yes on this matter and humbly ask to better our understanding on what would justify these types of cases in any situation that it is seen fit. Thank you for your time.

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

ALII PLACE  
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-7400 • FAX: (808) 768-7515 • WEB: <https://honoluluprosecutor.org/>

**LATE**

STEVEN S. ALM  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
LOIO HO'OPI'I



THOMAS J. BRADY  
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
HOPE MUA LOIO HO'OPI'I

THE HONORABLE CAROL FUKUNAGA, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawai'i

February 1, 2026

**RE: S.B. 2516; RELATING TO PUBLIC SAFETY.**

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Lee, and members of the Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu submits the following testimony in **support** of S.B. 2516.

S.B. 2516 amends the penalty for hindering prosecution in the first degree by grading it according to the seriousness of the predicate offense. Current law treats first-degree hindering as a class C felony, regardless of the underlying crime. S.B. 2516 would assign a penalty one grade lower than the predicate offense.

A conviction for hindering prosecution requires proof that the person rendered assistance to a felony offender.<sup>1</sup> Rendering assistance includes concealing a fugitive, deceiving investigators, or destroying evidence.<sup>2</sup> Hindering prosecution also requires proof that the person acted with the conscious object of thwarting the apprehension, prosecution, conviction, or punishment of the felony offender.<sup>3</sup> Mere passive refusal to surrender a suspect does not qualify.<sup>4</sup>

Consistent with common law, Hawai'i punishes an accomplice to the same extent as the principal.<sup>5</sup> Accomplices may solicit the crime, aid in its planning or execution, or refrain from reasonable efforts to prevent the crime when legally obliged to do so.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, hindering prosecution has traditionally qualified one as an accessory after the fact—culpable to a lesser

---

<sup>1</sup> HRS § 710-1029(1).

<sup>2</sup> HRS § 710-1028.

<sup>3</sup> HRS § 710-1029(1).

<sup>4</sup> See *State v. Line*, 121 Hawai'i 74, 86-88, 214 P.3d 613, 625-27 (2009).

<sup>5</sup> HRS § 702-221(c). See also 4 William Blackstone, COMMENTARIES ON THE LAWS OF ENGLAND, at \*37-39; *Territory v. Bollianday*, 39 Haw. 590, 593 (Terr. 1952).

<sup>6</sup> HRS § 702-222.

degree.<sup>7</sup> S.B. 2516 reasonably grades this culpability according to the predicate offense. While the public has a general interest in the lawful adjudication of any offense, society has a greater stake in resolving the most serious crimes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

---

<sup>7</sup> See Blackstone, *supra* note 3, at \*39 (noting that accessories after the fact qualified for benefit of clergy); *Territory v. Low*, 23 Haw. 108, 111-12 (Terr. 1912) (exemption for close family of the principal).

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 3:24:17 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cacique J Melendez	Testifying for SHOPO Hawaii	Support	In Person

Comments:

I fully support stronger penalties for those individuals who knowingly choose to assist wanted criminals. Without this bill, there are little to no repercussions for those individuals who are just as guilty.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 4:07:39 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elik Vodovoz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Elik Vodovoz, and on March 14, 2025, I was shot in the head and arm by Chris Lucrisia. Immediately after Lucrisia shot me, he was driven away by Silas Zion. Zion was captured later that day in the same vehicle with the license plates removed and hiding from law enforcement. He assisted in Lucrisia to evade law enforcement and potentially destroy evidence. Fast forward to the penalty that Zion received was being sentenced to one year probation. It was a very frustrating experience and the punishment that Zion received does not fit the crime that he committed.

**The Need for Proportional Accountability**

Currently, Hawaii law often treats the act of "hindering prosecution" as a Class C felony, regardless of whether the individual is assisting a petty thief or a violent offender. This "one-size-fits-all" approach fails to reflect the gravity of the underlying crime and the danger that certain offenders pose to our community.

\* Closing the Accountability Gap: Under current statutes, someone who provides shelter, transportation, or resources to a person who has committed a mass casualty event or killed a law enforcement officer faces the same maximum penalty as someone assisting with a significantly less severe felony. SB2516 corrects this by ensuring the penalty for "hindering" is tied to the severity of the crime committed.

\* Deterrence: By elevating the sanctions for assisting those who commit the most heinous acts—specifically making hindering a Class A felony when murder is involved—we send a clear message that the state will not tolerate the enabling of violent fugitives.

\* Supporting Law Enforcement: This bill is part of the Law Enforcement Coalition Package. It provides our justice system with the necessary tools to hold the "support network" of dangerous criminals accountable, thereby aiding in the swifter apprehension of primary offenders.

**Promoting Respect for the Law**

Justice is best served when the punishment fits the crime. Establishing a gradient penalty structure ensures that our legal system recognizes the increased harm done to society when someone actively works to shield a violent criminal from facing the consequences of their actions.

**Conclusion**

I respectfully urge the committee to pass SB2516. This bill is a common-sense update to our public safety laws that ensures our penalties reflect the seriousness of the actions taken to

obstruct justice.

Mahalo for your time and for your commitment to the safety of our islands.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 4:18:02 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shyla Moon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose more laws over laws we already have.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 1/31/2026 9:55:13 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelcie Kahoolihala	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly believe this will help in keeping the public and officers safe.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:15:08 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Clifford Antonio	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of SB 2516, a measure that strengthens accountability for individuals who knowingly assist offenders in evading arrest or prosecution for serious crimes.

SB 2516 addresses a critical gap in our criminal justice system, one that has had devastating real-world consequences. This bill was drafted in response to tragic incidents, including the line-of-duty death of Officer Bronson Kaliloa and the shooting of Officer Elik Vodovoz, where the actions of those who aided offenders contributed to continued violence and loss of life. These cases underscore the urgent need to hold not only principal offenders accountable, but also those who knowingly help them avoid justice.

The bill makes two important and necessary changes.

First, SB 2516 reclassifies hindering prosecution in murder cases as a Class A felony. Assisting a murderer to escape detection, arrest, or prosecution directly endangers the public and undermines the integrity of the justice system. Elevating this offense appropriately reflects the severity of the harm caused by such conduct and reinforces that aiding a murderer is itself a grave criminal act.

Second, the bill aligns punishment for hindering prosecution to be just one level below the underlying offense committed by the principal offender. This proportional approach is both fair and logical. Those who knowingly assist serious criminals play a meaningful role in enabling continued violence, witness intimidation, and additional crimes. Accountability should reflect that reality while still recognizing the distinction between the principal offense and the act of assistance.

SB 2516 sends a clear message: helping violent offenders evade justice will carry serious consequences. This measure strengthens deterrence, enhances public safety, and honors the memory of those whose lives were lost or forever changed by preventable acts of violence.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB 2516.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your continued commitment to protecting our communities and those who serve them.

Respectfully submitted,

Clifford Antonio

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 5:42:28 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charrise Wakita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Charrise Wakita and I am support of Senate Bill 2516

Our officers are dedicated in protecting the community and make sacrifices daily. It is **heartbreaking** when an officer is injured in the line of duty—particularly when the officer is fighting for their life, only to lose a part of their physical being as a result of a violent assault. The trauma does not just affect the officer but their families, colleagues, and the entire community they are sworn to protect.

It is devastating when offenders who not only directly engage in violence but also assist the suspect in evading justice are able to walk free in court. This undermines the very foundation of our justice system and sends a dangerous message—that those who harm or enable the harm of law enforcement officers may face no true consequences for their actions.

By strengthening penalties for those who intentionally interfere with criminal cases, we are sending a clear message that such conduct will not be tolerated. Allowing such actions to go unpunished not only harms the victims but also damages public trust in the justice system itself.

SB 2516 ensures that individuals who intentionally seek to assist in evading prosecution are held responsible for their actions.

I urge the Committees to pass SB 2516.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:45:29 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tyler Ubias	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:02:11 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shannon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is unnecessary and not specific enough - using only one extreme example as clarification without considering more minor uses of the bill. For instance, how does one determine if the assistance was given under duress?

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:02:41 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chester Holt	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The wording in the bill is too vague. It never clarified whether the accomplices have to be "knowingly" helping and if there are exceptions to those giving assistance under threat of violence.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:12:39 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lily Villarin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:13:58 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Villarin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:30:14 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Revells	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill !

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:51:39 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Acquavella	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop the assault on officers

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 12:56:32 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Albertbraceros	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 1:19:56 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rustin Magliba	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 1:32:50 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Dodo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Too often we have seen especially here in Hawaii County of where our respected officers who have been murdered and even seriously injured via shootings by a suspect, do not get rightful justice or see closure for their cases. Mostly to the individuals who have been involved in hindering the investigation or harboring/assisting who have often been released in a short time. Which to many including everyday citizens/civilians raise the question on why or how this can be, where the bigger question is asked why the penalty isn't hiring for assisting or hiding a "cop killer", who is often viewed as highly dangerous to society as if they are willing to kill a sworn officer of the law, when/where would they stop or who wouldn't they murder at this point.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 2:12:20 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Otto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2516 on every level because it discourages people from being accomplices to crime. With no discouragement, it only encourages behavior.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 2:59:03 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Guy Yoshimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Same as SB 2518, people need to be held accountable for their actions and involvement. We have laws for a reason and our judicial system needs to follow it or change it if it's not working or to better the outcome. People will learn from other people's mistakes. And if not, they will find out! One of the reasons why we make laws is to deter crime. Not to have people think it doesn't apply to them because nothing will happen or I will only get a slap on the wrist! Please make our state better and safer for all! Thank you!

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:00:16 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan J.D. Lu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Sirs and Ma'ams,

Please protect our Honolulu Police Department Officers, who are being assaulted more and more in 2026. Please pass this bill.

Thank You,

Alan Lu

**LATE**

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 3:36:35 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
henry lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hindering prosecution is not a victimless or technical offense. When individuals knowingly assist offenders in evading arrest, destroying evidence, lying to investigators, or otherwise obstructing justice, they directly undermine public safety and the rule of law. These actions delay accountability, allow offenders to remain at large, and often place innocent people and responding officers at greater risk.

Current penalties do not adequately reflect the seriousness of this conduct. In many cases, the consequences for hindering prosecution are so minimal that they fail to deter intentional interference with criminal investigations. This sends the wrong message—that helping a criminal avoid justice is a low-risk act. **It is not.**

Stronger penalties would serve three important purposes. First, they would create meaningful deterrence by making clear that obstructing justice carries real consequences. Second, they would reinforce accountability by holding individuals responsible when they deliberately interfere with lawful investigations. Third, they would support victims by reducing delays in justice and increasing the likelihood that offenders are apprehended promptly.

Law enforcement officers and prosecutors rely on truthful cooperation from the public to do their jobs effectively. When people actively work against that process, they weaken trust in the justice system and contribute to a culture of lawlessness. Elevating penalties for hindering prosecution affirms that our community values integrity, accountability, and the fair administration of justice.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 7:00:27 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chris Millen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this proposed bill.

**LATE**

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/1/2026 10:51:10 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
james smith	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Subject: Testimony on S.B. 2516 – Hindering Prosecution Penalty Structure

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

My name is James H. Smith, and I am a resident of O‘ahu, a Career & Technical Education teacher, small business owner, and father. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.B. 2516 relating to public safety and amendments to hindering prosecution.

I want to begin by stating clearly: I support strong accountability for those who knowingly assist violent criminals. No community should tolerate individuals who hide murderers, destroy evidence, or help offenders evade law enforcement. Protecting our neighborhoods and supporting our officers is a priority we all share.

However, I respectfully ask the Legislature to reconsider how S.B. 2516 structures its penalties and to add safeguards that ensure the law remains constitutional, precise, and fair in application.

**Concern 1 – Proportional Punishment (Eighth Amendment)**

By tying the penalty for hindering prosecution directly to the severity of the original offense—elevating it to a Class A felony when the underlying crime is murder—the bill risks imposing punishment that may be disproportionate to the actual conduct of the person charged. Federal precedent such as *Enmund v. Florida* and *Solem v. Helm* caution against punishing individuals at a level approaching that of the principal offender when they neither participated in nor intended the original crime.

A person who did not plan, commit, or intend a homicide could face up to 20 years in prison for actions that occur after the fact. This raises legitimate constitutional concerns that could expose the State to costly legal challenges and potentially narrow the law through court rulings.

**Concern 2 – Due Process and Clarity**

Terms such as “render assistance” and “hinder” must be narrowly defined. Without clear statutory language requiring proof that the person knew the exact nature and severity of the original crime, the law could be applied too broadly. Supreme Court precedent in *Kolender v. Lawson* requires laws to be sufficiently precise so ordinary people understand what conduct is prohibited.

Safeguards are especially important in situations involving family members or individuals acting out of fear, confusion, or incomplete information.

### Concern 3 – Accessory-After-the-Fact Historically Treated as Lesser

Courts have long recognized a distinction between those who participate in a crime and those who assist after the crime is completed. Elevating hindering prosecution to near-equivalent felony exposure blurs this distinction and may conflict with established legal principles recognized in federal jurisprudence.

### Suggested Improvements

The intent of this bill—to deter the harboring of violent offenders—is sound. I respectfully suggest the following amendments to strengthen the bill while reducing constitutional risk:

1. Require proof that the accused had actual knowledge of the specific felony committed.
2. Require proof of intent to help the offender evade law enforcement, not merely association or delayed reporting.
3. Limit Class A felony exposure to cases involving substantial, active assistance, such as destroying evidence, transporting the offender across jurisdictions, or concealing the offender for a significant period.
4. Provide explicit exemptions for individuals acting under duress, coercion, or reasonable fear.
5. Clarify definitions of “rendering assistance” to avoid unintended broad application.

These adjustments would preserve the bill’s public safety goals while ensuring it withstands constitutional scrutiny and is applied only to those who knowingly and deliberately protect violent offenders.

Mahalo for your service and for considering these recommendations. I respectfully ask the Committee to amend S.B. 2516 to include these safeguards.

Respectfully,

James H. Smith

**LATE**

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 12:43:25 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/2/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Atom Kasprzycki	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill violates the US Constitution and the Second Amendment.