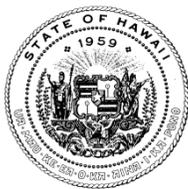


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



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

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

Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
10:15 AM  
State Capitol, 016

**SB2695,SD1**  
**RELATING TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

Senate Committee on Judiciary

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) strongly supports S.B. 2695, S.D. 1, relating to clarifying driver obligations at crosswalks and strengthening penalties for violations, especially in school zones.

This bill addresses critical safety concerns for pedestrians, particularly in school zones and for visually impaired individuals. By requiring drivers to stop and remain stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks, and by strengthening penalties for violations, this legislation aligns with our department's commitment to improving road safety and reducing pedestrian fatalities and injuries.

In recent years, Hawaii has witnessed tragic incidents involving pedestrians, including in school zones. Our data shows that pedestrians, especially those aged 17 and younger or 65 and older, are particularly vulnerable. From 2020 through 2024, pedestrians accounted for 27 percent of all traffic fatalities and 16 percent of all serious injuries in our state. These statistics underscore the urgent need for stronger measures to protect pedestrians.

The DOT believes that clarifying driver obligations and increasing penalties will serve as a stronger deterrent to risky driving behavior. This approach is consistent with our Vision Zero Action Plan, which aims to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. By focusing on school zones, this bill provides enhanced protection for our most vulnerable road users – our children.

Furthermore, the additional protections for blind and visually impaired pedestrians address a critical need for inclusive safety measures on our roads. This provision ensures that our transportation system becomes more accessible and safer for all members of our community.

We view this bill as a crucial step towards creating a safer environment for pedestrians across Hawaii. It complements our ongoing efforts in pedestrian safety, including the installation of raised crosswalks, implementation of traffic calming measures, and continuous public education on road safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this bill.



# DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

Ka 'Oihana Ho'oka'a'ike no ka Po'e Kīnānā

1010 Richards Street, Rm. 118 • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • Fax (808) 586-8129 • (808) 204-2466 (VP)

March 3, 2026

## TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

### Senate Bill 2695 Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Pedestrian Safety

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Bill 2695 Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Pedestrian Safety. This bill clarifies a driver's obligations at crosswalks. It requires drivers to stop and remain stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks. Strengthens penalties for traffic violations, particularly in school zones. Expands the offense of negligent injury in the second degree to include bodily injury to a vulnerable user by the operation of a vehicle in a negligent manner. Effective 1/1/2027.

Persons who use wheelchairs and other mobility devices and persons of short stature are lower to the ground and are therefore less visible to drivers looking over the hood of their vehicles. Pedestrians who are blind or have low vision rely on audio cues from traffic control devices and are unlikely to be able to take actions to avoid a car. In addition, pedestrians with a mobility disability – such as persons with arthritis, vascular and orthopedic conditions – may not have the agility or reflexive speed to get out of the way of an approaching vehicle.

We request the bill be amended to read:

“SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the State has experienced persistently high levels of traffic-related fatalities over recent years, with pedestrians representing a disproportionate and growing share of those deaths. In recent years, pedestrians have accounted for a significant percentage of all traffic fatalities statewide, reflecting a sustained pattern of vulnerability for individuals walking along Hawaii's roadways. Many of the fatalities and serious injuries suffered by pedestrians have occurred while individuals were lawfully using marked or unmarked crosswalks, including in residential neighborhoods, school-adjacent areas, and other locations with regular pedestrian activity.

The legislature further finds that the State, through the department of transportation and in coordination with county governments, has committed to reducing traffic deaths and serious injuries through comprehensive roadway safety planning consistent with vision zero principles, which recognize that traffic fatalities are preventable and that roadway systems must prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable road users. These commitments emphasize safer speeds, safer streets, safer behavior, and clearer legal standards governing driver conduct.

The legislature also finds that walking is a fundamental, equitable, and environmentally sustainable mode of transportation and that residents and visitors cannot reasonably be expected to walk, access public transit, or support sustainable

transportation goals unless pedestrians are afforded clear, enforceable, and meaningful legal protections when crossing public roadways.

The legislature additionally finds that section 291C-72, Hawaii Revised Statutes, while requiring drivers to stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, lacks sufficient specificity regarding when the duty to stop is triggered and how long a driver must remain stopped, creating ambiguity that undermines enforcement, accountability, and compliance. Other jurisdictions with better pedestrian safety outcomes, such as Oregon and Washington state, have adopted explicit "stop and remain stopped" standards and lane-based trigger points that clearly allocate responsibility to the operator of the motor vehicle, which is the heavier and more dangerous instrument.

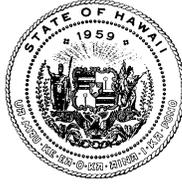
Furthermore, the legislature finds that children walking to and from school, older adults, ~~[and] individuals [with visual impairments]~~ who are blind or have low vision, and pedestrians who have mobility disabilities face heightened risk and require enhanced statutory protections, particularly in school zones and other high-pedestrian-use areas. Existing penalties for crosswalk violations may be insufficient to deter dangerous driving behavior and do not adequately reflect the severity of harm caused when violations result in serious bodily injury."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,



KRISTINE PAGANO  
Acting Executive Director



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

P. O. Box 3378  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378  
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WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY ONLY

Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2695, S.D. 1  
RELATING TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

SENATOR KARL RHOADS, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Hearing Date: March 03, 2026

Room Number: Conference Room 016  
and Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) supports Senate Bill 2695, Senate Draft  
3 1 (S.B. 2695, S.D. 1), which clarifies a driver's obligations at crosswalks. The measure requires  
4 drivers to stop and remain stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks, strengthens penalties for  
5 traffic violations, particularly in school zones, and expands the offense of negligent injury in the  
6 second degree to include bodily injury to a vulnerable user by the operation of a vehicle in a  
7 negligent manner.

8 **Department Testimony:** This measure supports Hawaii's goal of reducing traffic related deaths  
9 and serious injuries to zero by 2045. Traffic fatalities in Hawaii increased over twenty (20)  
10 percent between 2024 and 2025; most alarming, Oahu saw an increase of over sixty (60) percent  
11 in fatalities in the same period. Nearly one-third of all traffic fatalities in Hawaii in 2025 involved  
12 a pedestrian, many of whom were lawfully crossing the road. The Federal Highway  
13 Administration refers to this as a "safety culture," that considers safety for all users.<sup>1</sup> Focusing on

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. *Safety Culture*. Retrieved 1-27-25 from:  
<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/zero-deaths/safety-culture>

1 improving crosswalks, reducing vehicle speeds, and designing safer streets (e.g., implementing  
2 traffic calming measures) can reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities.

3           Despite Hawaii’s favorable climate, geography, and reputation for active outdoor living,  
4 only 33% of adult and 18% of high school students in Hawaii met federal guidelines for physical  
5 activity.<sup>2,3</sup> The design of roads that integrate active transportation options like walking,  
6 bicycling, and transit is a public health concern since the safety and accessibility of a  
7 community’s built environment can promote or hinder physical activity. This includes removing  
8 barriers to safely and conveniently accessing active transportation options. Safe, accessible,  
9 and walkable communities encourage physical activity and can promote better health  
10 outcomes in communities whose populations are at less risk for serious chronic diseases and  
11 conditions such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.<sup>4</sup>

12           Policies that enhance pedestrian priority at marked and unmarked crosswalks are  
13 critical for accessibility and connectivity to essential community destinations, and safety.  
14 Prioritizing the rights of pedestrian when crossing a street promotes safety and encourages  
15 walking and rolling and supports Hawaii’s commitment to Vision Zero.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None

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

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<sup>2</sup> Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, 2023;  
[https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/PhysActMeetRec/PhysActMeetRec\\_HS\\_ST.html](https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/PhysActMeetRec/PhysActMeetRec_HS_ST.html).

<sup>4</sup> CDC *About Physical Activity*. 2021.



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bicycle@hbl.org

SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
Tuesday - March 3, 2026 - 10:15am

**Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports SB 2695, SD1, relating to Pedestrian Safety**

Aloha Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard 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 supports SB 2695, SD1 to clarify driver obligations at crosswalks with enhanced requirements for stopping/yielding to pedestrians; strengthens penalties for violations, particularly in school zones; creates additional criminal penalties when pedestrians suffer bodily injuries as well as heightened protections for blind and visually impaired pedestrians.

Given that 2025 was one of the deadliest years in decades on Hawai'i roads, it is imperative to take bold action to influence public behavior change and raise awareness about road safety for all road users, especially vulnerable users, including pedestrians. This is aligned with Vision Zero principles which have been adopted by the State and the Counties. It also supports creating walkable communities and Honolulu's 2026 Charter Amendment for a more bike- and pedestrian-friendly city.

HBL urges you to support this bill and help leverage the safety benefits it presents so that individuals and families can be better protected in crosswalks statewide. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

S/Eduardo Hernandez

**Eduardo Hernandez**  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Bicycling League

**SB-2695-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/24/2026 10:11:12 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/3/2026 10:15:00 AM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I see pedestrians crossing against the traffic signals very frequently, no consequences, no enforcement, not a care in the world. The judicial system needs to step up and enforce the current pedestrian laws. Do not place all the blame with driver. Use the red-light camera to count illegal crossings, including people who begin crossing during the count down to light change. More laws will not make anyone safer.

**SB-2695-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/25/2026 6:26:13 PM

Testimony for JDC on 3/3/2026 10:15:00 AM

<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

2695 SB RELATING TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY.

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair  
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair  
Committee on Judiciary

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: March 2, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2695 SD1  
Measure Title: RELATING TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY.  
Report Title: Pedestrian Safety; Crosswalks; Penalties

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2695 SD1. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore