

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**

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

**KAUA'I 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

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

February 17, 2026

**SB2710: RELATING TO ANIMALS**

**Chair Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection**

The Office of the Public Defender (OPD) **opposes** SB2710 for the reasons set forth below.

The OPD does not condone the mistreatment, neglect or abuse of any animal. However, the OPD believes the focus should be on increased enforcement of existing laws paired with education and rehabilitation of offenders rather than increasing punishments.

Increasing the penalty for an offense does not deter the prohibited conduct. In its publication "Five Things About Deterrence,"<sup>1</sup> the National Institute of Justice sets forth several<sup>2</sup> relevant precepts regarding deterrence: (1) "The certainty of being caught is a vastly more powerful deterrent than the punishment"; (2) "Sending an individual convicted of a crime to prison isn't a very effective way to deter crime"; (3) "Police deter crime by increasing the perception that criminal will be caught and punished"; and (4) "Increasing the severity of punishment does little to deter crime." Increasing the severity of the offenses listed in this bill and exposing violators to up to twenty years of imprisonment will not deter others from committing acts of animal abuse.

<sup>1</sup> "Five Things About Deterrence," May 2016, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/247350.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The fifth precept, "There is no proof that the death penalty deters criminals," is not relevant to the instant bill.

The Legislature’s objective should be channeling resources to enforce existing laws and focusing on education and rehabilitation of offenders. Instead of increasing the penalties for existing animal cruelty offenses, a more productive approach would be to maintain enforcement of existing laws and to focus on educating and rehabilitating offenders using non-carceral, non-punitive practices. According to the National Institute of Health, “[a]nimal welfare legislation is routinely underenforced by the state.”<sup>3</sup> Further, “[e]nforcement does not necessarily need to involve carceral outcomes, and indeed, sometimes ‘in the field’ educational or supportive responses to offending – as an alternative to criminal or regulatory response – are more appropriate.”<sup>4</sup> For example, the Benchmark Animal Rehabilitative Curriculum’s (B.A.R.C.) online Animal Cruelty Prevention and Education Course is designed to “inspire change in attitudes and actions toward individuals who have mistreated them.”<sup>5</sup> B.A.R.C. emphasizes the value of education as preventing repetitive animal abuse.

By failing to include some form of education as part of whatever other measures the criminal justice system takes against those who mistreat animals, we’re virtually guaranteeing that nothing about the offenders’ thoughts and attitudes toward animals will change. A system that punishes animal abuse offenders, but ignores the need for rehabilitation, means many will reoffend. If the criminal justice system desires to reduce the likelihood that offenders will repeat their abusive behavior toward animals, it’s imperative that in most, if not all, cases of animal abuse, an educational component be included as part of the pre- or post-conviction terms or conditions.

**Educating abusers about animals’ needs, and what the law requires owners to provide for their animals, is a critical element of rehabilitation in animal cruelty cases.**

---

<sup>3</sup> Rodriguez Ferrere, M. B., “Animal Welfare Underenforcement as a Rule of Law Problem,” June 12, 2022, National Institute of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information.

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://barceducation.org/>

(Emphasis added). Indeed, even the Hawaiian Humane Society notes the importance of education as a response to animal abuse or cruelty.<sup>6</sup> Education should not only focus on offenders but also community members. One suggestion is that the DOE add classes on “humane education,” which works at the root causes of human cruelty and abuse of animals, to their curriculum.<sup>7</sup> “Humane education” could address situations where children are brought up in homes where animal cruelty is the norm.

Enforcement goes hand-in-hand with education. If laws are not enforced, increasing penalties will just be a “paper tiger.”<sup>8</sup> On many occasions, reports of animal abuse go uninvestigated or unprosecuted.<sup>9</sup> The Legislature should consider increased funding for animal welfare organizations with the specific purpose of increasing resources dedicated to the enforcement of animal welfare laws.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the OPD also notes that §B-6(b) of SB2710 seeks to preclude an animal shelter, pet store, animal breeder, zoo or aquarium from employing or volunteering with that entity. The OPD appreciates the issues that could arise if a person convicted of animal abuse were to work with animals. However, there should be a distinction made between persons who commit cruelty to animals by intentionally or knowingly harming the animal such as when a person commits Cruelty to Animals in the First Degree and unintentional neglect due to lack of education such as Cruelty to Animals in the Second Degree by failing to provide “necessary sustenance.” Failing to provide “necessary sustenance” has every specific requirements, some of which may not be within the knowledge or experience of some persons.<sup>11</sup> Persons who commit

---

<sup>6</sup> See “Investigations, Rescues & Laws,” Hawaiian Humane Society (“We walk a fine line between education, advocacy, and enforcement, using an outreach-based approach for animal welfare. Often, we find that where the laws fall short, our influence as advisors and partners with pet owners, yields positive results.”)

<https://hawaiianhumane.org/investigations-rescues-laws/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://worldanimal.net/our-programs/humane-education/the-need-for-humane-education>

<sup>8</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9179835/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2024/09/26/lawmaker-calls-upgraded-criminal-charges-owner-accused-abusing-dog-years/>

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. <https://www.khon2.com/local-news/hawaii-animal-abuse-discussed-in-first-of-its-kind-conference/>

<sup>11</sup> Under HRS § 711-1100, “Necessary sustenance” means care sufficient to preserve the health and well-being of a pet animal, except for emergencies or circumstances beyond the reasonable

animal cruelty by unintentional neglect might benefit from education or experience with animals such as by having them perform community service at an animal shelter or rescue organization. The OPD suggests that a limited exception be made to allow certain persons to perform their community service at animal shelters or rescue organizations where they could be educated on animal care and gain empathy for animals who are similarly mistreated.<sup>12</sup>

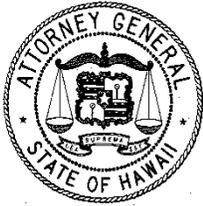
In sum, the OPD does not condone animal mistreatment, neglect or abuse, **and** urges the Legislature to focus on enforcement of current statutes, education and rehabilitation as more effectual and corrective efforts when preventing cruelty against all animals. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB2710.

---

control of the owner or caretaker of the pet animal, and includes but is not limited to the following requirements:

- (1) Food of sufficient quantity and quality to allow for normal growth or maintenance of body weight;
- (2) Open or adequate access to water in sufficient quantity and quality to satisfy the animal's needs;
- (3) Access to protection from wind, rain, or sun;
- (4) An area of confinement that has adequate space necessary for the health of the animal and is kept reasonably clean and free from excess waste or other contaminants that could affect the animal's health; provided that the area of confinement in a primary pet enclosure shall:
  - (a) Provide access to shelter;
  - (b) Be constructed of safe materials to protect the pet animal from injury[.]
  - (c) Enable the pet animal to be clean, dry, and free from excess waste or other contaminants that could affect the pet animal's health;
  - (d) Provide the pet animal with a solid surface or resting platform that is large enough for the pet animal to lie upon in a normal manner, or, in the case of a caged bird, a perch that is large enough for the bird to perch upon in a normal manner;
  - (e) Provide sufficient space to allow the pet animal, at minimum, to do the following:
    - (i) Easily stand, sit, lie, turn around, and make all other normal body movements in a comfortable manner for the pet animal, without making physical contact with any other animal in the enclosure; and
    - (ii) Interact safely with other animals within the enclosure; and
- (5) Veterinary care when needed to prevent suffering.

<sup>12</sup> The OPD is unaware whether the TAILS program at WCCC or the Greyhound Training Program at Saguaro Correctional Facility prohibit persons convicted of animal abuse from participating in the program.



**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. 2710, RELATING TO ANIMALS.

**BEFORE THE:**  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 18, 2026      **TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 229

**TESTIFIER(S):** Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or  
Mark S. Tom, Deputy Attorney General

---

Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) submits the following comments regarding section 5 of this bill (page 12, line 17, through page 23, line 11).

The purpose of this bill is to establish minimum standards of care and record-keeping requirements for "dog breeders," as that term is defined in the bill; and to require anyone convicted of Animal Cruelty in the First or Second Degree to register with an animal abuser registry overseen by the Department. In addition, the bill creates the new offense of Animal Hoarding, and increases penalties for Animal Cruelty in the First and Second Degree.

The Department agrees that animal cruelty in any form is a serious public safety concern, and takes no position on this bill's approach to addressing animal cruelty. From an implementation standpoint, however, the Department estimates that it will cost over \$300,000 to establish and over \$100,000 to annually maintain the "animal abuser registry" outlined in section 5 of this bill. This estimated cost would cover the fewer than 27 convictions recorded in the past five years for sections 711-1108.5 and 711-1109, Hawaii Revised Statutes, but could increase if the number of convictions ever sharply increased.

If the Committee passes this bill, the Department respectfully asks that appropriations be added to the bill to cover all necessary expenses for the Department. We also note that, if the Committee passes this bill, the Department will provide a more detailed cost estimate for the proposed registry, prior to the next hearing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this bill.



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai‘i*  
*Ka ‘Oihana Ho‘okolokolo, Moku‘āina ‘o Hawai‘i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026 Regular Session**

**Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection**

Senator Jarrett Keohokalole, Chair

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

By

Michelle Acosta

Deputy Chief Court Administrator, Hawai‘i State Judiciary

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

---

**Bill No. and Title:** Senate Bill No. 2710, Relating to Animals.

**Purpose:** Defines a "dog breeder" as any person who owns, possesses, controls, or otherwise has charge or custody of more than ten dogs over the age of twelve months with intact sexual organs, and who sells, barter, or otherwise transfers more than three litters and more than twenty-five dogs per calendar year. Requires dog breeders to meet minimum standards of care and not place certain types of dogs in the same enclosure to ensure the proper treatment and care of dogs and the dogs' offspring. Prohibits any person from owning or having custody of more than thirty dogs over one year with intact sexual organs. Requires dog breeders to maintain specific written records for each dog for a specified period. Authorizes each county to assess, implement, and enforce its own licensing system for dog breeders. Requires persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the attorney general. Requires animal shelters, animal breeders, and pet stores to check whether an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when the individual applies to work or volunteer, or purchases or adopts an animal. Prevents persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working in close proximity to animals. Establishes the offense of animal hoarding. Establishes civil and criminal penalties for violations. Increases criminal penalties for cruelty to animals in the first and second degree. Allows for increased penalties for persons convicted of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree in certain situations.



Senate Bill No. 2710, Relating to Animals  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.  
Page 2

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary provides the following comments. As currently written, the measure would take effect immediately upon approval. The Judiciary respectfully requests that the effective date be set as January 1, 2027. This additional time is necessary to allow for necessary updates to the Judiciary Information Management System (JIMS), and to ensure proper implementation by the courts

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2710.



## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 16, 2026

To: Chair Sen. Jarrett Keohokalole  
Vice Chair Sen. Carol Fukunaga  
and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer  
Protection

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Vice President of Community Engagement  
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony in support of SB 2710: Relating to Animals  
Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2025, 9:30 a.m., Room 229 & Videoconference

---

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for Senate Bill 2710, which defines a "dog breeder" as any person who owns, possesses, controls, or otherwise has charge or custody of more than ten dogs over the age of twelve months with intact sexual organs, and who sells, barter, or otherwise transfers more than three litters and more than twenty-five dogs per calendar year; requires dog breeders to meet minimum standards of care and not place certain types of dogs in the same enclosure to ensure the proper treatment and care of dogs and the dogs' offspring; prohibits any person from owning or having custody of more than thirty dogs over one year with intact sexual organs; requires dog breeders to maintain specific written records for each dog for a specified period; authorizes each county to assess, implement, and enforce its own licensing system for dog breeders; requires persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the attorney general; requires animal shelters, animal breeders, and pet stores to check whether an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when the individual applies to work or volunteer, or purchases or adopts an animal; prevents persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working in close proximity to animals. Establishes the offense of animal hoarding; establishes civil and criminal penalties for violations. Increases criminal penalties for cruelty to animals in the first and second degree; allows for increased penalties for persons convicted of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree in certain situations.

This comprehensive animal protection measure addresses several vital animal welfare priorities in our state.



## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

### Dog Breeding

Pet breeding is completely unregulated in Hawaii. While responsible breeders invite potential pet owners to visit their homes and see the conditions in which animals are bred and raised, there is no such transparency from most people who sell pets in our state. There is also no ability for law enforcement to examine breeding establishments and verify the welfare of animals without a search warrant. This bill would create a regulatory regime for people who keep more than ten intact adult dogs and produce more than three litters or 25 puppies per year. This is a reasonable threshold and will exclude small-scale hobby breeders from regulation.

This measure protects consumers and animals by holding for-profit breeders accountable for the health and welfare of the animals they breed and sell.

### Animal Abuser Registry

Two states and several municipalities across the country require animal abusers to register with authorities. This measure would put Hawai'i at the forefront of protecting both animals and vulnerable people. Decades of research shows a correlation between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence. Animal crimes should raise red flags across the law enforcement and social services systems.

### Animal Hoarding

The Hawaiian Humane Society **recommends deleting Section 6 on animal hoarding.**

Our animal cruelty statute allows for the prosecution of people who are neglecting or abusing animals. To create an offense that is tied just to the number of animals on a premises runs the risk of punishing rescues and sanctuaries who are providing humane care for their animals. These nonprofits and Good Samaritans are a vital part of our animal welfare ecosystem.

### Animal Cruelty Penalties

Animal cruelty is a difficult crime to prosecute. Its victims cannot seek justice for themselves, many offenses take place behind closed doors and witnesses frequently know the perpetrators and are unwilling to testify, often out of fear.



## Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

When there is sufficient evidence to bring an animal cruelty case to trial, the hard work and bravery it takes to bear witness on behalf of vulnerable animals results in minor penalties, almost never including jail time. This measure would elevate the penalties in the case of first- or second-degree cruelty against a pet animal or animals.

**We recommend that the elevation of second-degree cruelty offenses be limited to the offenses described in Section 8 (4) subsection 5.** Elevating all offenses to felony charges would have the counterintuitive effect of limiting law enforcement as county animal services contractors are only allowed to bring misdemeanor charges. While we understand and support the intent of the bill, we believe this change would have negative unintended consequences.

We urge the committee to pass Senate Bill 2710 with our suggested amendments for the protection of animals and people. Mahalo for your consideration.



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

**LATE**

February 17, 2026

Re: American Kennel Club Comments on S.B. 2710: RELATING TO Animals.

Dear Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection:

The American Kennel Club (AKC) writes today on behalf of our 41 Hawaii based kennel clubs and the many responsible dog owners and breeders in the state to respectfully ask you to oppose Senate Bill 2710. While the AKC strongly supports efforts to combat animal cruelty and irresponsible breeding practices, this bill, as written, imposes overly broad restrictions that would burden responsible breeders and dog owners, create unworkable regulatory requirements, and fail to achieve its stated goals in a targeted or effective manner.

The AKC strongly supports holding animal abusers accountable, but several provisions of this bill raise serious concerns for responsible breeders and owners across Hawaii.

First, the new rules placed on “dog breeders” concerning care and conditions are arbitrary, one-size-fits-all, and restrictions on breeding based solely on age are also arbitrary and do nothing to foster better breeding practices. Different dogs have different needs (both for their care and best breeding practices) based on individual breed, size, health, behavior, etc.; Hawai'i should focus on enforcing existing animal cruelty laws and making sure dog breeders consult with a veterinarian in making sure their dogs are safe to be bred.

Second, the bill's cap of thirty intact dogs over the age of one year is an arbitrary limit that fails to account for the legitimate operational needs of responsible breeders, show kennels, and working dog facilities. Penalizing responsible breeders who happen to maintain larger operations does nothing to improve animal welfare. The AKC believes that standards of care—not arbitrary numerical limits—should define what constitutes responsible ownership.

Third, the AKC supports the registration of convicted animal abusers as a concept, but the lifetime registration requirement and the obligations placed on animal shelters, breeders, and pet stores to screen all potential adopters or purchasers present significant practical and legal challenges. Requiring private citizens and small businesses to access and act upon a government registry—with financial penalties for failure to do so—is an extraordinary burden that should be carefully weighed before enactment.

The AKC strongly believes that education, outreach, and targeted enforcement against bad actors are the most effective tools for improving animal welfare. To meaningfully address animal cruelty and irresponsible breeding in Hawaii, the AKC recommends the following:

- Ensure Hawai'i dog breeders are consulting with their veterinarian on ensuring their dogs are safe to be bred and direct resources toward funding robust enforcement of existing animal cruelty statutes to ensure proper care and conditions are being maintained.
- Replace the arbitrary thirty-dog cap with enforceable, outcome-based standards of care that apply equally to all breeders regardless of the number of dogs maintained, focusing on conditions, veterinary access, and socialization.
- Ensure that any animal abuser registry is administered by law enforcement with appropriate privacy protections, and that obligations on private businesses to screen registrants are clearly defined, practical, and not subject to civil penalties without adequate guidance.

We appreciate the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection's attention to this important issue and their commitment to the welfare of animals in Hawaii. The AKC shares that commitment and stands ready to work with the legislature to craft targeted solutions that hold bad actors accountable without burdening the responsible owners and breeders who are already doing right by their animals. Thank you for reviewing and considering our comments.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Rilling-Smith', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Bob Rilling-Smith  
Legislative Analyst/Community Outreach Coordinator  
American Kennel Club  
(919) 816-3960 | [bxr@akc.org](mailto:bxr@akc.org)

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:15:59 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angela Young	Testifying for CARES	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

**Aloha CPN committee,**

**Pleae consider a friendly amendment.**

**Amend “with intact sexual organs” to say...**

**"Dog breeder" means any person who owns, possesses, controls, or otherwise has charge or custody of more than 10 dogs over the age of 12 months “that are not spayed or neutered”.**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:38:16 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathy Carroll	Testifying for Maui Humane Society	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Maui Humane Society supports SB2710, with the exception of the new hoarding offense. Our animal cruelty statute already allows for the prosecution of people who are neglecting or abusing animals in their care. Creating an offense tied solely to the number of animals risks punishing rescues and sanctuaries that provide humane care. There are so many animals in need in our community, and these nonprofits and Good Samaritans are a vital part of our animal care ecosystem.

The other aspects of this measure address several important issues we do support: addressing “backyard breeders”; requiring persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the attorney general; requiring animal shelters, breeders, and pet stores to check whether a job applicant, volunteer, or potential adopter has been convicted of animal abuse; and preventing persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working closely with animals. We strongly support the increase in criminal penalties for first and second degree animal cruelty convictions.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 3:56:06 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Senator Keohokalole, Vice Chair Fukunaga, and members of the committee,

I strongly oppose SB 2710. This would establish a breeder registry of people who own more than the current allowed number of dogs, from 10 to 30 animals. This measure would entail more unnecessary government expense and oversight because of enforcement issues that this measure would require. This measure is not needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 12:37:30 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Richard	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have witnessed The multiplication of dogs for hunting purposes as they are used on Kauai as an expendable commodity by some hunters that go out with 20+ dogs at a time. If a dog gets separated, lost or injured they are left behind in remote areas. The experimentation of breeding they employ are fast (whippet and greyhound) with the furious (pitbulls and staffordshires) along with the great hunting hounds (Plott, Catahoula etc.). Its a crap shoot breeding strategy whereby only some of the outcomes provide the desirable traits. Those pups that don't make the cut seem to be abandoned, thrown out and left to their own devices as their traits can be squirrelly at best. I have fostered over 25+ such dogs as a volunteer. Kauai can do better than allow this in its treatment of dogs. Other "hoarding" I've witnessed is more of a lack of responsibility to fix their initial dogs which becomes expotential over time.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:57:46 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill because the definition of "dog breeder" does not include the term "commercial". I am concerned that if I am labeled as "dog breeder" because I travel to the mainland to compete in AKC events with my intact animal or purchase a purebred puppy (in order to compete) as the language in SB3012 suggests I will be (even though I have never had a litter of puppies from my dogs) that I would be subjected to intrusive and unnecessary inspections of my property, added expense for undefined "administrative fees" and extra expense of having to "prove" when I do travel with a pet that is not intact. I am also concerned that this bill will become problematic when the time comes for enforcement. How exactly are the "dog breeders" going to be forced to register? Who is going to keep track of pets that are not sold in pet stores? Who exactly is going to be responsible to carry out inspections? I object to having any more money given to the Hawaiian Humane Society without having an audit of their finances to see why their efforts have had seemingly insignificant effect on the " free roving" animal population on Oahu.

Testimony in Support of SB2710 Relating to Animals  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 9:30 am

Honorable Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection,

I am writing as a private citizen to express my strong support for SB2710 Relating to Animals, with comments on one provision.

For years, our community has needed stronger protections for animals, and SB2710 addresses several critical gaps in our existing laws.

Establishing clear standards of care and recordkeeping requirements for dog breeders is long overdue. While I anticipate that some breeders may oppose these provisions, viewing them as government overreach or unnecessary regulation. I would respectfully counter that the standards outlined in this measure reflect what responsible breeders are already doing. Providing adequate shelter, nutrition, veterinary care and maintaining records of the animals in your care are not burdensome requirements. They are the bare minimum of humane animal care. Breeders who are already meeting these standards have nothing to fear from this measure. For those who are not, that is precisely the problem this bill seeks to address. Licensing and minimum standards of care exist in many industries to protect consumers and, in this case, the animals who cannot advocate for themselves. Our community deserves the assurance that pets being bred and sold in Hawai'i are being raised in humane conditions.

The provisions creating an animal cruelty registry and restricting convicted abusers from possessing or working with animals are especially meaningful. Animals deserve protection from repeat offenders, and shelters, rescues, breeders and pet stores deserve the tools to help keep animals safe.

I also strongly support the increased penalties for cruelty to animals in the first and second degree. Our current penalties do not adequately reflect the seriousness of these offenses, and stronger consequences send a clear message that animal abuse will not be tolerated in Hawai'i.

I do, however, wish to respectfully share a concern regarding the proposed animal hoarding offense. While I understand and appreciate the intent behind this provision, I worry that tying a criminal offense to the number of animals in a person's care could have unintended consequences for legitimate rescue organizations and sanctuaries that are providing humane, responsible care. Our existing animal cruelty statutes already provide a pathway to address situations where animals are being neglected or abused, regardless of

how many animals are involved. Hawaii's network of rescue organizations and compassionate community members who step up to care for animals in need is essential, and I would not want well-meaning caregivers to face penalties when their animals are healthy, well-cared for and living in appropriate conditions.

I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2710 and to consider refining the hoarding provision to focus on the quality of care being provided rather than the quantity of animals alone.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brandy Shimabukuro

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:21:05 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Samantha Yu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of SB2710, which strengthens Hawai‘i’s animal protection laws and addresses longstanding gaps in enforcement that research shows are linked to broader public safety outcomes.

Extensive empirical research demonstrates a significant correlation between animal cruelty and interpersonal violence, including domestic abuse. Studies indicate that individuals with histories of animal abuse are more likely to perpetrate violence against people. One analysis found that individuals who had committed animal abuse were five times more likely to commit violent offenses against humans.<sup>1</sup> Research involving domestic violence survivors reports that in 70–89 % of households where intimate partner violence occurred, the abusive partner also threatened or harmed companion animals as a means of coercion or control.<sup>2</sup> Another study found that in four out of five families experiencing domestic abuse, partners had also been violent toward pets, and that concern for pets’ safety often delayed victims leaving abusive situations.<sup>3</sup> Reviews of the broader violence literature show that co-occurrence of animal abuse and family violence can range from 25 % to over 80 % depending on context and definitions.<sup>4</sup> Law enforcement and criminal justice stakeholders increasingly recognize animal cruelty as a predictive indicator of broader violent behavior.<sup>5</sup>

Hawai‘i’s current statutory framework has historically lacked felony-level penalties for many forms of companion-animal cruelty and contains enforcement gaps.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, reports from the Honolulu Police Department show that animal cruelty investigations have steadily increased in recent years.<sup>7</sup> These trends highlight the need for clearer definitions, enforceable standards of care, and stronger accountability mechanisms.

SB2710 addresses these needs by defining “dog breeder” with objective criteria, limiting the number of intact dogs, requiring minimum care standards and written records, authorizing local licensing systems, and establishing the offense of animal hoarding with civil and criminal penalties. Provisions requiring persons convicted of animal cruelty to register and prohibiting them from owning, working with, or being near animals are consistent with research supporting risk-reduction and prevention.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to pass SB2710.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully,

Samantha Yu

## References

1. “The Link Between Animal Abuse and Violent Crime” — individuals with animal-abuse histories were found to be five times more likely to commit violence against humans. Published summary via Pet-Abuse.com (based on multiple criminal justice data analyses).  
Link: [https://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/abuse\\_connection.php](https://www.pet-abuse.com/pages/abuse_connection.php)
2. Animal Cruelty & Domestic Violence Co-Occurrence — 70–89 % of domestic abuse cases reported concurrent animal harm used as a control or coercive tactic. National Sheriffs’ Association overview.  
Link: <https://www.sheriffs.org/animal-cruelty-and-domestic-violence>
3. Animal Abuse and the Link to Domestic Violence — study finding 4/5 co-occurrence of animal violence in families with domestic violence; concern for pets delayed victim exit. U.S. Dept. of Justice review abstract.  
Link: <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/animal-abuse-and-link-domestic-violence>
4. Societies Journal Review on Animal Abuse and Interpersonal Violence — comprehensive review showing co-occurrence rates 25 % to >80 %. MDPI Societies.  
Link: <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/11/11/514>
5. FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin — discusses the predictive link between animal cruelty and human violence recognized by law enforcement professionals.  
Link: <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/the-link-between-animal-cruelty-and-human-violence>
6. Hawai‘i Animal Cruelty Statutes — current statutory language and the lack of felony penalties for many forms of animal abuse. Hawai‘i Revised Statutes §711-1108.5.  
Link: <https://law.justia.com/codes/hawaii/title-37/chapter-711/section-711-1108-5/>
7. Animal Cruelty Case Reports (HPD) — Honolulu Police Department data showing increases in cruelty investigations (2018–2023). Hawai‘i Legislature bill package reference.  
Link: [https://data.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2026/Bills/HB698\\_SD2\\_.PDF](https://data.capitol.hawaii.gov/sessions/session2026/Bills/HB698_SD2_.PDF)

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:28:25 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marian Hussenbux	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB2710 Relating to Animals is very important as it defines a "dog breeder;" requires dog breeders to meet minimum standards of care; requires dog breeders to maintain specific written records; and authorizes each county to assess, implement, and enforce its own licensing system for dog breeders.

We particularly approve of the requirement for animal shelters, animal breeders, and pet stores to check whether an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when the individual applies to work or volunteer, or purchases or adopts an animal; and prevents persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working in close proximity to animals. There is currently much evidence in he USA and here in Britin that people with malign intent do adopt animals , volunteer to work with them and cause appalling suffering and death.

As this measure tackles several issues that have long been public policy priorities for the Hawaiian Humane Society we are in support of the Bill except for the new hoarding offence as it is tied only to the numbers if animals in care and this could punish vitally important rescues and sanctuaries.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:30:21 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Kart	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Desperately Needed. Lets do better Hawaii. We are consistently ranked at the bottom tier for animal welfare. Where is the aloha for other living creatures without voices ?

Even owning 30 intact dogs just to make money is ridiculous.

Also please note that HPD has brought cruelty cases to the prosecutors, and they have refused to bother, Its just a dog that got his throat slit.

Therefore, we need the legislative arm to pass stricter rules so the prosecutors dont get to ignore animal cruelty, and criminals dont get away with it,

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:53:51 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shelley Dunbar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of this measure - with the exception of the hoarding offense - as it addresses several critical issues that will protect our companion animals. The hoarding offense is not necessary since our animal cruelty statute already allows for the prosecution of people who are neglecting or abusing the animals in their care. To create an offense that is tied just to the number of animals in care runs the risk of punishing rescues and sanctuaries who are providing humane care for their animals. There are so many animals in need in our community, and these nonprofits and Good Samaritans are a vital part of our ecosystem of animal care.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:38:04 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kehau Lee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong support for the Hawaiian Humane Society's stance on this bill.

Kehau Lee

Honolulu

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:33:50 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Keohokalole, Vice Chair Senator Fukunaga and Members of the Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection.

Please support SB 2710 which increases protection for animals from cruelty. I especially support requiring people convicted of animal cruelty to register with the Attorney General and requiring checking if an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when applying for work or volunteering, or buying or adopting an animal. These actions would help prevent abuse instead of allowing abuse and then seeking punishment.

Again, please support SB 2710.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:27:34 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Serena Stefanic-Phillip	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill SB2710.

I live in Punalu'u, Oahu and I am a volunteer at the Hawaiian Humane Society.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:09:15 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because

- Better clarifies individuals who breed dogs and provides oversight on maintaining specific written records; and authorizes each county to assess, implement, and enforce its own licensing system for dog breeders.
- Prevents any person from owning or having custody of more than 30 dogs over one year with intact sexual organs.
- It requires persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the attorney general; requires animal shelters, animal breeders, and pet stores to check whether an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when the individual applies to work or volunteer, or purchases or adopts an animal; and prevents persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working in close proximity to animals.
- It establishes the offense of animal hoarding and establishes civil and criminal penalties for violations.
- It increases criminal penalties for cruelty to animals in the first and second degree and allows for increased penalties for persons convicted of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree in certain situations.

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:16:29 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support of all except boarding offense. To create an offense that is tied just to the number of animals in care runs the risk of punishing rescues and sanctuaries who are providing humane care for their animals.

Hawai Kai voter

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:39:15 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheri Iha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support [SB2710](#) Relating to the Cruelty of Animals.

## Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2101

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

My name is Natalie Parra, and I am a resident of Hawai'i Island. I am writing in strong support of this bill.

Over the last few years, I have become very active in my community helping neighbors spay and neuter their pets and assisting in finding homes for stray animals that wander onto their properties. Through this work, I have witnessed firsthand the scale and severity of animal abandonment, neglect, and abuse in our communities. This is not an isolated issue. It is widespread, ongoing, and happening now.

Even within my small neighborhood alone, I have seen extreme cases that illustrate the urgency of this issue. One neighbor shot his own dogs when he no longer wanted them. Another neighbor hoarded cats in cages and would leave town for extended periods, leaving them without access to food or water. These situations were deeply disturbing, but just as troubling was the lack of any consequences to prevent further harm.

What is most concerning is that **these acts persist because perpetrators know there are little to zero safeguards or consequences to prevent repeat offenses.** Individuals who have harmed animals are often able to acquire new animals or remain in positions of access to them. Without stronger legal protections, this cycle will continue.

**This bill addresses critical gaps that currently leave animals at constant risk of severe abuse, neglect, and suffering.** Prohibiting individuals convicted of animal cruelty from owning, possessing, or working closely with animals is a crucial first step to getting this issue under control. Establishing the offense of animal hoarding and strengthening penalties for cruelty will provide law enforcement and the courts with essential tools to intervene. Requiring background checks will help prevent animals from being placed into situations where they are at known risk of harm.

Every single hour of every single day that these protections are not in place, animals remain at risk of preventable suffering. Passing this bill is necessary to ensure that those who have demonstrated cruelty toward animals are no longer given the opportunity to harm them again.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge you to SUPPORT this bill.

Sincerely,  
Natalie Parra  
Hawai'i Island Resident

**LATE**

TESTIMONY regarding SB2710

Testimony in support of **support of points covered in SB2710 EXCEPT I oppose establishing additional legislation establishing penalties for animal hoarding. While I definitely oppose animal hoarding, existing Hawaii animal cruelty statute already allows for the prosecution of people who are neglecting or abusing the animals in their care. To create an offense that is tied just to the number of animals in care runs the risk of punishing rescues and sanctuaries who are providing humane care for their animals. There are so many animals in need in our community, and these nonprofits and Good Samaritans are a vital part of our ecosystem of animal care.**

This omnibus animal protection measure's main points that I support are:

- It defines a "dog breeder;" requires dog breeders to meet minimum standards of care; requires dog breeders to maintain specific written records; and authorizes each county to assess, implement, and enforce its own licensing system for dog breeders. **Support**
- It prohibits any person from owning or having custody of more than 30 dogs over one year with intact sexual organs..**Support**
- It requires persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the attorney general; requires animal shelters, animal breeders, and pet stores to check whether an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when the individual applies to work or volunteer, or purchases or adopts an animal; and prevents persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working in close proximity to animals. **Support**
- ~~It establishes the offense of animal hoarding and establishes civil and criminal penalties for violations.~~ **OPPOSE**
- It increases criminal penalties for cruelty to animals in the first and second degree and allows for increased penalties for persons convicted of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree in certain situations. **Support**

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:19:07 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michele Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of SB2710 — Relating to Animals**

Senate Committee on Commerce & Consumer Protection

Wednesday, February 19, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.

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

My name is Michele, and I am a Hawai'i resident and community member deeply concerned about animal welfare across our islands. I am writing in strong support of SB2710, with the exception of the proposed new hoarding offense provision.

This bill represents a crucial step toward improving accountability, care standards, and oversight for those who breed, sell, or work with animals. By clearly defining “dog breeder,” requiring proper recordkeeping, and empowering counties to implement local licensing systems, SB2710 helps protect both animals and consumers. These measures will help ensure that dogs are not raised in inhumane or overcrowded conditions and that responsible breeders are recognized for maintaining high standards of care.

I have personally volunteered with the Hawaiian Humane Society during a major animal hoarding and breeding case and witnessed firsthand the suffering of dogs that were neglected, overbred, and kept in horrible, disgusting, and distressing conditions. The experience left a lasting impression on me and reaffirmed how urgently we need stronger laws to prevent cruelty, exploitation, and irresponsible breeding practices.

I am strongly in favor of the provisions that:

- Require persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the Attorney General,
- Prevent those with cruelty convictions from working closely with animals, and
- Increase penalties for repeated or aggravated acts of cruelty.

These are common-sense safeguards that will strengthen accountability and protect animals across the state.

However, I share the Hawaiian Humane Society's concern about creating a new offense of “animal hoarding.” Our existing cruelty statutes already provide a means to prosecute those who neglect or abuse the animals in their care. Defining hoarding by a fixed number of animals risks

penalizing reputable rescues, sanctuaries, and community members who provide humane care for animals that would otherwise have nowhere to go. These caregivers are an indispensable part of Hawai'i's animal welfare network and should be supported, not discouraged.

SB2710, overall, is a vital measure that advances animal protection, public safety, and ethical standards of care. I respectfully urge the committee to pass this measure with the exception of the new hoarding provision.

Mahalo for your time and dedication to improving animal welfare in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,  
**Michiele Moore**

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:28:24 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB2710. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:08:46 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Senators,

I DO NOT support this bill. I urge you to vote against this measure. The Hawaiian Humane Society receives millions of dollars each year to oversee and investigate unscrupulous and inhumane situations for dogs and cats. Why is there (what I see as) an attempt to raise more funds through taxing responsible breeders when we all already pay taxes going to HHS? This unfairly targets preservation breeders, and those who show animals.

This will do NOTHING to address the issue of people allowing their animals to roam freely and procreate.

I urge you to vote AGAINST this proposed legislation.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:23:36 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jane E Arnold	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jane Arnold and I live in Kaimuki. I am requesting that you support SB2710, except for the provision that hoarding is an offence.

Jane Arnold

1763 Iwi Way

Honolulu HI. 96816



I strongly oppose SB2710.

The breeder requirements and prohibitions are ridiculous on paper. Many things within the measure are already being done by responsible breeders. This measure reads as just another opportunity for the state to take money from responsible people. It is clear that the writers believe breeding is a big money maker with no realization of the amount of money it takes to run **a responsible breeding program**. Responsible breeders/ pet owners put a lot of time, money, and care into these animals, as they are expensive “investments”. None of these parties would let their breeding program or homes get to an irresponsible/derelict point. Responsible breeders expend most of these funds by putting these monies back into their program through at least annual vet care for pet maintenance (which includes vaccinations, flea/ tick prevention, blood tests PER ANIMAL), high quality food and supplements, health/ genetic testing to ensure healthy breeding stock (PER ANIMAL), and importation of new animals to ensure the continuation of outcrosses for healthy line preservation (ie: prevention of inbreeding), among other things. Not to mention the various toys, activities, and mental stimulators required for all animals, but especially the high energy breeds.

Breeders who are registered with National/ International associations are usually breed preservationists who follow strict breed standards and association regulations. These breeders are already regulated by their association and each litter accounted for, with strict litter restrictions (re: number of litters a female can have a year).

This is a far reach for the writers to introduce. Were (responsible) dog breeders or dog/ breeding associations contacted and asked their input or given the opportunity to weigh in? No, they were not. This measure was NOT written or guided by breeders who could work with the writers’ group. Realistically, who will be burdened with the responsibility of enforcing this? This measure will only be followed by the **small** community of responsible breeders while the larger community of irresponsible (back yard breeders/ puppy mills) will continue to produce unhealthy litters with little to no consequences when not “caught”. Instead of targeting and restricting responsible breeders, create a task force to seek out the irresponsible ones who are actually contributing to the pet and feral overpopulation. Mahalo for your time and opportunity to submit testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:35:44 AM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am submitting strong opposition to Senate Bill 2710.

I oppose this bill because it fails to distinguish between irresponsible, high-volume sources of dogs and the small, ethical breeders who are essential to preserving healthy, predictable, and well-tempered purebred dogs in Hawai‘i.

**Responsible Small Breeders Are Not the Problem**

Hawai‘i has a dedicated community of small, hobby breeders who:

- Raise dogs in their homes, not in kennels or commercial settings
- Health-test breeding dogs and follow strict breed-club codes of ethics
- Participate in AKC sports such as conformation, obedience, rally, agility, herding, and scent work
- Carefully screen homes, require contracts, and take back any dog for life
- Produce only occasional litters with the goal of preserving breed health, structure, and temperament

These breeders are not contributing to overpopulation. Their dogs are wanted, planned, and responsibly placed. Many of these dogs go on to serve the community as therapy dogs, service-dog candidates, search-and-rescue partners, and ambassadors of responsible ownership.

**SB 2710 Sweeps Responsible Owners Into the Same Category as Problem Sources**

This bill treats all breeders as if they are the same. They are not.

The real contributors to overpopulation are:

- Irresponsible backyard breeders who do not screen homes
- High-volume sellers who import puppies for profit
- Individuals who allow accidental litters
- Situations involving transient or unstable housing where dogs are not sterilized or contained

None of these reflect the practices of small, ethical breeders who invest enormous time, money, and care into every dog they produce.

### Purebred Preservation Matters

Purebred dogs are not a luxury — they are a public good. Predictable structure, temperament, and working ability allow families, service-dog programs, and community organizations to choose dogs that reliably meet their needs.

Preservation breeders safeguard:

- Genetic diversity
- Breed-specific working traits
- Health testing traditions
- Temperament stability
- The continuation of breeds that would otherwise disappear

SB 2710 would make it harder for these responsible breeders to continue their work, while doing little to address the actual sources of unwanted dogs.

### A Targeted Approach Works — SB 2710 Does Not

Effective policy focuses on:

- Enforcement of existing laws
- Regulation of high-volume sellers
- Support for spay/neuter access in vulnerable communities
- Education on responsible ownership

Blanket restrictions on responsible small breeders will not reduce shelter intake. It will only reduce the availability of healthy, well-bred dogs and push families toward unregulated sources.

### Conclusion

I respectfully urge the committee to reject SB 2710. Hawai‘i needs solutions that address the true causes of overpopulation, not legislation that harms the very people who are doing things right.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:28:22 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello, My name is Jennifer Wood and I'm an advocate for animal health and wellbeing. I ask that you please support SB2710 that helps protect animals.

By ensuring breeders meet a minimum standard of care for dogs, those purchasing dogs can know the dog has been cared for and its health has been maintained. This bill also protects animals by requiring animal abusers to register and by increasing the penalties for animal abuse. Animal abuse is a tragic offense to often defenseless creatures. Plus animal abuse is one of the number one signs that these individuals are capable of future abuse of people. By holding abusers responsible with increased penalties, and making them register with the Attorney General, we can help protect other animals from future harm.

Hawaii must help protect our animals! Please help by supporting this bill.

Thank you,

Jennifer Wood

808-221-7229

Kalaheo, HI

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:29:43 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB2710.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:32:43 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jan Allen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support and pass this bill - SB2710. Hawaii is in serious need of having stricter laws regarding rampant animal cruelty & related issues. This bill is carefully worded so that it can be approved. It provides acceptable rules for those who breed animals, includes spaying & neutering, animal hoarding, a registry accessible to all pet organizations of those who have committed animal cruelty, & harsher laws relating to animal cruelty, which is on the rise on Oahu.

Please pass this much needed bill!

Mahalo,

Jan Allen

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:52:57 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please consider this bill!

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:00:23 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

**I strongly oppose this bill.**

- **Hawaii has laws on the books protecting dogs from animal cruelty; they should be rigorously enforced.**
- **Arbitrary limits on numbers of dogs owned or bred are not good proxies in determining whether a breeder or owner are responsible and do not address the best interest of every dog.**
- **The individuals voting for this bill most likely are not experienced breeders and lack the understanding of the dog breeding business and challenges for reputable breeders.**
- **Let's eliminate regulations rather than add more regulations.**

**Thank you.**

Sincerely,

Ted Ketcham

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:13:32 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I live in hawaii and oppose this bill because it would create administrative burden on our county animal control agencies who are struggling to enforce existing and basic animal control services. I support funding for animal control and spay and neuter programs. One only has to look at the available animals or the county shelter to see these poor creatures are mixed breed animals and not purposely bred by breeders. There is a large surplus of animals of mixed breeds - adults and puppies- and an issue of roaming dogs and cats. We need to focus our limited funds and resources on addressing the real causes.

Attached is a capture of a recent post of intakes.



**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:07:05 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Vote in opposition to this Bill.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 4:23:22 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

**RE: SB 2710 – RELATING TO ANIMALS**

Position: **Oppose Unless Substantially Amended**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully submit testimony in opposition to SB 2710 unless it is substantially amended. While the bill seeks to strengthen animal welfare protections, it raises significant constitutional, fiscal, administrative, and intergovernmental concerns.

**I. County-State Structural Conflict**

SB 2710 overlays a new statewide regulatory framework onto systems already administered by:

- City and County of Honolulu
- Hawai'i County
- Maui County
- Kauai County

Although the bill includes a non-preemption clause, it functionally supersedes county discretion by:

- Imposing a statewide 30 intact dog cap
- Mandating inspection standards
- Requiring county-administered licensing
- Creating state criminal penalties layered over local civil enforcement

This creates regulatory duplication and exposes counties to unfunded administrative burdens.

**II. Constitutional Concerns**

**A. Arbitrary Numerical Cap (30 Intact Dogs)**

The statewide cap does not account for:

- Agricultural zoning
- Rural acreage
- Existing lawful kennel operations

This invites substantive due process challenges under rational basis review.

## **B. Vagueness in Animal Hoarding Provision**

The statute leaves a blank numerical threshold in the hoarding section, creating a potential void-for-vagueness defect.

## **C. Regulatory Takings Risk**

Breeders currently operating legally under county permits may be forced to divest animals, creating potential inverse condemnation claims.

## **III. Unfunded Mandate on Counties**

SB 2710:

- Requires inspections
- Requires licensing administration
- Requires enforcement
- Creates registry coordination obligations

Yet provides no dedicated funding.

## **IV. Expansion of Criminal Liability**

The bill:

- Elevates cruelty to a felony in more circumstances
- Creates lifetime registration requirements
- Expands employment prohibitions

These are major policy shifts requiring further study.

## **V. Overbreadth of Animal Abuser Registry**

The registry:

- Applies for life

- Applies to out-of-state convictions
- Applies even to non-residents staying 10+ days

This creates interstate enforcement complexity and potential Commerce Clause concerns.

## **VI. Recommendation**

If the Legislature wishes to address commercial breeding, it should:

- Conduct a fiscal study
- Harmonize with county zoning
- Narrow the dog cap to commercial facilities
- Clarify hoarding thresholds
- Limit registry duration

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to defer SB 2710 unless amended.

I highly recommend that committee read the Sunrise Analysis: Regulation of Large-Scale Dog Breeders and Facilities Report No. 11-02, October 2011 (<https://files.hawaii.gov/auditor/Reports/2011/11-02.pdf>). The report had following conclusion:

1. Proponents have failed to demonstrate a need for regulation as defined by sunrise law.
2. The proposed regulation is flawed.
3. Alternatives to protect dogs are available.

Did State consider the report findings to develop SB2710?

Duane Inoue

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:12:28 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Taurie Kinoshita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 2710.

This vital, long-desired bill would require persons convicted of animal cruelty to register with the attorney general, require animal shelters, animal breeders, and pet stores to check whether an individual has been convicted of animal abuse when the individual applies to work or volunteer, or purchases or adopts an animal, and would prevent persons convicted of animal cruelty from possessing, owning, or working in close proximity to animals.

This bill would also establish the offense of animal hoarding and establishes civil and criminal penalties for violations and increase criminal penalties for cruelty to animals in the first and second degree and allow for increased penalties for persons convicted of cruelty to animals in the first and second degree in certain situations.

In other words, this bill would be instrumental in helping to prevent animal cruelty.

The true measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. Please protect our vulnerable animal-ohana and pass SB 2710.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Taurie Kinoshita

lifetime voter and resident

February 17, 2026

**LATE**

Testimony in **opposition** of **Senate Bill 2710**

Relating to animal importation

Members of Senate Committee

I along with many other Dog Fanciers in Hawaii strongly oppose the above Senate Bill. I do not believe the problems identified in this bill will be resolved with the implementation of the proposed bill.

The measures outlined in this Bill will not address the REAL Problems of overpopulation of stray animals.

It is unreasonable to imply that the intact animals coming into Hawaii are the major cause of animal over population when the majority of these dogs, in this case are entering Hawaii to participate in a dog show and thus must be intact to participate.

In addition people from Hawaii travel to the mainland with their intact pets and would be fearful of this legislation upon return to Hawaii.

I currently have 7 dogs, all intact and have never bred any of them. I also have many friends with a similar situation who are responsible pet owners.

Thank you for your consideration of my opposition as well as my family's to the passing of this bill.

Carol Agard  
2157 Awikiwiki Pl  
Pearl City, Hi 96782

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:47:41 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hailey Dennis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To see the way that pets are treated on this island and the way that they're dumped and there's no consequences for the actions that are given to these animals is sick and cruel These pets are living breathing creatures and for them to be just tossed to the side and the owner's face nothing is nothing but a disgrace to this government we wouldn't do this to a child we shouldn't be doing it to a pet when you get an animal you take on the responsibility of caring for something that is bigger than just yourself.

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:16:20 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katrina Poremba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SB2710 – Relating to Animal Welfare

To: Chair and Members of the Legislative Committee

From: Katrina Poremba

Date: February 17, 2026

Statement of Support

I am writing to express my strong support for SB2710. This legislation represents a critical step forward in evolving our legal framework to protect those who cannot speak for themselves. By increasing the penalties for animal cruelty, we send a clear message that the mistreatment of sentient beings is a serious offense that will no longer be met with a "slap on the wrist."

Professional Perspective and Expertise

My support for this bill is informed by both my academic background and my professional experience in the field:

- **Academic Foundation:** I hold a Bachelor of Science in Zoology, which provided me with a deep understanding of animal behavior, physiology, and the biological needs required for a species to thrive.
- **Clinical Experience:** As a former Veterinary Technician, I have stood on the front lines of animal care. I have witnessed firsthand the physical and psychological scars left by neglect and intentional cruelty; especially from mass breeding for profit.

The Cruelty of Unregulated Breeding

A primary concern that SB2710 addresses—and one that requires urgent oversight—is the industry of unregulated animal breeding. From a zoological and clinical perspective, intensive breeding is often a form of systemic cruelty.

When profit is prioritized over welfare, we see:

1. Genetic Complications: Overbreeding leads to debilitating hereditary conditions that cause lifelong pain.
2. Maternal Exhaustion: Forcing animals into continuous reproductive cycles is physically destructive.
3. Lack of Socialization: Animals kept solely for "production" are often deprived of the basic environmental enrichment necessary for their mental well-being.

#### The Island Crisis: Abandonment and Overcrowding

Living on an island creates a unique, closed ecosystem that makes the issue of unregulated breeding even more dire. We do not have the luxury of infinite space or resources.

- Overfilled Societies: Our humane societies and local rescues are currently at a breaking point, operating well beyond their intended capacity.
- The Abandonment Loop: For every animal bred for profit, a seat is effectively taken away from a shelter animal waiting for a "forever home." This contributes to the heartbreaking cycle of abandoned pets roaming our streets and wilderness.

By strengthening animal cruelty laws and moving toward better regulation of these practices, SB2710 will help stem the tide of overpopulation and ensure that animal ownership is treated with the gravity it deserves.

#### Conclusion

We have a moral obligation to ensure our laws reflect a high standard of compassion and responsibility. I urge this committee to pass SB2710 to protect our animals, support our overburdened shelters, and hold abusers accountable.

Thank you for your time and for your consideration of this vital testimony.

Sincerely,

Katrina Poremba

Katrina.Poremba@GMail.com

**LATE**

**SB-2710**

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:43:20 PM

Testimony for CPN on 2/18/2026 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I oppose SB710. Restricting the number of dogs or pets a person can have and calling that person a hoarder is not a label that should be bestowed on anyone randomly with an arbitrary number. Hoarding situations are due to mental illness. There are many caring citizens who have the capability and wherewithal to care for multiple animals and that right should not be taken from them.

**LATE**

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE MOHAR  
SB2710 - RELATING TO ANIMALS  
HB2101 - RELATING TO COMMERCIAL AQUARIUM  
COLLECTION  
SB2078 - RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND  
AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
Position: SUPPORT**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committees,

My name is Christine Mohar, and I am a resident of Punaluu, O'ahu. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of SB2710, HB2101, and SB2078.

**Support for SB2710 - Relating to Animals**

I support this measure because it establishes clear standards of care for dog breeders, improves accountability, and strengthens protections against animal cruelty. Requiring licensing, record-keeping, and stronger penalties for abuse will help ensure animals are treated humanely and responsibly. These provisions are important to prevent neglect, reduce suffering, and support the shelters and rescue organizations that serve our communities.

**Support for HB2101 and SB2078 - Protecting Reef Fish**

I also strongly support these measures to protect Hawai'i's reef fish from commercial aquarium collection. Removing wild fish from our reefs and transporting them long distances for sale often results in high mortality and unnecessary suffering. Many of these fish die before ever reaching a home aquarium. Additionally, these practices harm fragile reef ecosystems that are vital to Hawai'i's natural heritage, marine biodiversity, and local culture.

Protecting reef fish helps preserve the health of our reefs for future generations and reflects our shared responsibility to mālama Hawai'i's unique environment and wildlife.

These three measures represent thoughtful and meaningful steps toward improving the welfare of animals on land and in the ocean. They reflect the compassion and stewardship that are core values in Hawai'i.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support and pass SB2710, HB2101, and SB2078.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Christine Mohar  
Punaluu, O'ahu  
808-228-2340