



DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 13

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 530 SOUTH KING STREET ROOM 400 HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96813
PHONE (808) 527-5749 FAX (808) 527-5760 INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov>

Testimony of Thomas Smyth, Chair

House Committee on Transportation

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

8:30 am Room 309

On

HB 1977 Relating to Transportation

Chair Souki, Vice Chair Nishimoto, and Members of the Committee:

The Downtown Neighborhood Board strongly support HB 1977, which adds a \$150 fine for motorists who violate provisions of traffic control signal regulations. We recognize that motorists who violate the rules regarding red lights, whether it be by running a red light or making improper turns when pedestrians are crossing an intersection, risk their own lives and the lives of the pedestrians who are following the law.

It is ironic that the fine for jaywalking by a pedestrian is now \$137, while the current vehicle fine is less, only \$90. Motorists are licensed, having passed a test on traffic rules, including those pertaining to the signals at intersections. Pedestrians are not required to learn Hawaii's traffic rules and depend on their own experience in keeping up with the changes in the law. Immigrants and visitors from other countries that have very different pedestrian rules are at a decided disadvantage in avoiding the very specific provisions of Hawaii's pedestrian rules. Taking one step into an intersection after the signal has changed to the blinking red hand is punishable by the heavy fine. Arriving at a crossing and pushing the so-called pedestrian control button even a fraction of a second too late results in the inability to cross even if there is no traffic.

We are not sure what the compelling safety factor is for those intersections that have push-button devices that do not lengthen the crossing time or otherwise do nothing to change the conditions for crossing. City traffic safety officials just tell us that those are the rules; some sort of national standard that they must follow. If rules do not meet the "common sense" test they tend to be violated.

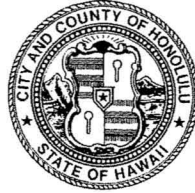
Please move this bill along, as a matter of fairness in what is often a life or death confrontation.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments on this important bill.

POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

801 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET · HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 529-3111 · INTERNET: www.honolulu.org

MUFI HANNEMANN
MAYOR



BOISSE P. CORREA
CHIEF

PAUL D. PUTZULU
MICHAEL D. TUCKER
DEPUTY CHIEFS

OUR REFERENCE EC-LC

January 23, 2008

LATE TESTIMONY

The Honorable Joseph M. Souki, Chair
and Members
Committee on Transportation
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Souki and Members:

Subject: House Bill No. 1977, Relating to Traffic Violations

I am Captain Evan Ching of the Traffic Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports House Bill No. 1977, relating to traffic violations. This bill will establish a \$150 monetary fine for disregarding a red traffic signal light that is contrary to section 291C-32(a)(3)(A) of the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

In 2007, Honolulu Police issued more than 5,000 traffic citations for this violation. Disregarding a red traffic signal is not only dangerous but often times cause traffic collisions that lead to severe injuries or death. Oftentimes, drivers who try to cross intersections when the light turns yellow will not make it and subsequently go through when the light turns red. This has often either cause a collision or a near miss by other vehicles. Establishing a \$150 monetary fine will deter drivers from trying to cross intersections when the light is red. This will result in saving lives and preventing injuries.

The HPD urges your committee to pass House Bill No. 1977, relating to traffic violations as it will save lives and prevent injuries on our roadways.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:

Sincerely,


BOISSE P. CORREA
Chief of Police


EVAN CHING, Captain
Traffic Division