



LATE A6

BY FAX: 586-6001

Committee: Committee on Finance
 Hearing Date/Time: Friday, February 22, 2008, 3:30 p.m.
 Place: Room 308
 Re: Testimony of the ACLU of Hawaii in Opposition to HB 3016, HD2, Relating to Law Enforcement

Dear Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee on Finance:

The American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii ("ACLU of Hawaii") writes in opposition to IIB 3016, HD2.

The ACLU of Hawaii opposes this bill because of the increasing number of deaths associated with Taser use, the lack of independent studies on several critical safety issues, and the lack of policy governing the use of the weapon. Further, the ACLU of Hawaii urges this Committee to work with law enforcement agencies to impose regulations on Taser use.

The ACLU of Hawaii recommends several policy reforms including the following:

Pass Legislation. This Committee should pass a law that allows Tasers to be used solely as an alternative to deadly force. The British Government currently employs such restrictions. Tasers are certainly a safer alternative to firearms, but until more independent safety studies are completed, law enforcement agencies should be restricted from using Tasers in non-life-threatening situations.

Adopt Stricter Policies. Local government and local law enforcement should each independently adopt Taser policies. If local law enforcement will not restrict its Taser use to life-threatening situations, agencies should, at a bare minimum, adopt policies to minimize the risk of death such as prohibiting repeated shocks and protecting vulnerable populations such as the very young, the elderly and pregnant women. Further, Taser policies should require more detailed reporting and mandatory medical treatment to those Tased, regardless of whether they were ultimately arrested.

Revise Training Materials. Local law enforcement agencies should conduct comprehensive reviews of the Taser International training materials, revise them, and retrain all officers that have already completed the Taser International training.

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