

LATE**Testimony in Support of SCR 88**

Aloha. My name is Mark Coronese. I am a resident of Maui, an involved member of my Kihei Community, and a Certified Playground Safety Inspector.

- I have two young children, ages 4 and 6, and their schools have little to no shade protection during recreation, meeting and waiting times.
- I also have very dear friends that are undergoing treatment for skin cancer. There is a possibility that this may have been prevented had their parents and teachers been aware of the risks they were being exposed to when they were children.
- For all of these reasons, I am here to speak in support of SCR 88 (previously SB 2348), an important resolution and hopefully one day a bill which would provide safety and protection for our most cherished possessions our keiki.

We know that Hawaii is in one of the world's highest UV zones, and we know that too much sun can be dangerous to us. Human nature, being what it is, leads us to believe that skin cancer is something that "will not happen to us", and if it does, we will deal with it later. Unfortunately, the facts surrounding skin cancer tell a different story.

Some Disturbing Facts – which you may be aware of:

- Over half of all new cancers are skin cancers ... and exposure to the sun is the primary risk factor.
- Melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, is now the second leading cause of cancer for women in their 20's and 30's.
- There have been no significant advances in the medical treatment of advanced melanoma or improvements in its survival rate in the last 30 years.
- U.V. damage to our skin is cumulative. It is not something that we can reverse like we can our cholesterol levels. The longer we live and the more time we spend outside, the more exposure we accumulate.
- Cataracts, once thought to be an inevitable part of aging, are also associated with UV exposure.
- The United States Department of Health and Human Services now classifies solar radiation as a known carcinogen.

- Melanoma is now the fastest growing cancer in the U.S., with cases increasing at an epidemic rate of 3% per year.
- More than one million people will be diagnosed with skin cancer this year.
- According to the Skin Cancer Foundation and the American Cancer Society, "One in five Americans will develop some form of skin cancer during their lifetime".

Why is this important to Hawaii?

We now know that skin cancer is one of the fastest growing cancers in the United States ... with Hawaii's growth rate among the highest in the Nation.

- A phone call to the Hawaii Tumor Registry will confirm that:
 - Melanoma has been the fastest growing cancer among Hawaii residents since 1975.
 - The Hawaii rate for males is nearly double what it was 25 years ago.

It is our keiki, who are especially vulnerable:

- Just one blistering sunburn during their childhood can double their risk of getting melanoma later in life.
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- Melanoma, which was seen primarily in adults over age 50, now strikes kids as young as age 10. Since 1982, incidences of pediatric melanoma have more than doubled.

What can we do about it?

I am not here to suggest that we should be alarmists – although the facts about skin cancer are startling.

- My testimony in support of SCR 88 (SB 2348) is to promote the awareness that there are safe alternatives available, and that we should embrace them in order to keep our children, our teachers and ourselves safe.

This bill gives us the chance to make a difference. It is in the early years of their lives where our schools have the "opportunity" to educate and protect our keiki against UV damage. Passing this bill will help to make it a "responsibility".

I would also encourage that this bill be broadened to:

- 1) Include private schools, preschools and day cares and not just be limited to public schools.
- 2) Add a mandatory education program into our schools to teach our students about the risks and prevention of skin cancer.
- 3) That a reasonable approach be adopted to implement this proposed bill, based upon a simple equation such as, "% of area involved"; or a "square foot per child" requirement for shade.

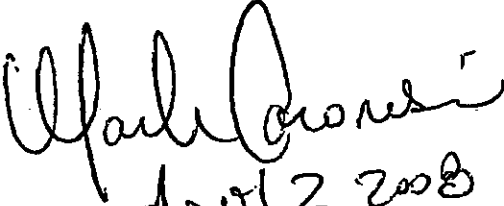
Thankfully, we know more about skin cancer today, than we did in previous generations. But "knowing" - is just not enough. It is "actions" such as the passing of this bill that will make a difference.

If we did not know about the dangers of UV exposure to our children ... and we carried on without doing anything different to protect them, then I guess we would just be "naive".

But, we do know the dangers. If we chose not to doing anything to mitigate them then what are we?

Remember, based on current statistics, doing nothing means that one in five of our children, will grow up to develop skin cancer!

Mahalo for your time and your consideration of this important issue.


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