

# LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony Presented before the  
Hawaii State Legislature  
2010 Regular Session  
January 28, 2010 at 9:45 p.m. Hearing  
by

Mr. Larry S. Veray, Pearl City Resident with Concerns

## HB1987 - RELATING TO FIREWORKS

Chair: Rep Faye Hanokano; Vice Chair: Rep Henry Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Larry Veray. I have been a resident of Hawaii for the past 26 years and sometime in the future it is my vision that I will be elected into a seat with this a gust forum. I am a retired U.S. Navy Command Master Chief and I served in the U.S. Navy for 24 years. Today, as a community volunteer leader, I serve on the Pearl City Neighborhood Board as Chairperson for Health Education and Welfare Committee. I also serve as HPD Neighborhood Security Watch Coordinator for Waiiau area and Board Member of the Waiiau Gardens Kai-B Homeowners Association. Today I am presenting testimony in support of HB1987 and on behalf of the many elderly, senior citizens, families with young babies and children, residents how own pets in Pearl City. Many of our citizens have been terrorized and victimized by people using illegal fireworks aerial bombs near homes, day care centers, schools, churches, hospitals and senior care homes. There are people in our community who have no consideration for the welfare of the young, the old, the elderly with medical and heart problems. For the past six months illegal fireworks have been used during celebrations of birthdays, Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays but the unforgettable event was the week leading up to New Years Eve. Many families have come to me with complaints who were personally victimized, shocked and jolted out of their beds while trying to rest and sleep. Waken at all hours of the day by loud explosions while feeling the impact of aerial bomb fireworks. On New Years Eve, thousands of aerial fireworks could be observed and heard throughout the community while the most impacting were the hundreds of illegal fireworks aerial bombs. These very loud, impacting explosions were similar to M-80 or Cherry Bombs but much louder.

My first concern I present to this forum is extremely important as I make each and everyone of you accountable of this problem that relates to Homeland Security and the safety of our communities. Tons of illegal fireworks explosives our entering our state harbors and ports without being detected by U.S. Customs, U.S. Coast Guard, ATA, FBI and port authorities as evidenced by the enormous use of aerial fireworks on New Years Eve. An organized crime ring has obviously found a way to smuggle explosives into our state and then distribute the material to unknown locations for later distribution. Importantly, storage of explosives some in probably stealth like fireworks warehouses could be embedded into our

own community and if so; imagine the potential disaster if one of these warehouses had a fire and resulted into a major explosion causing loss of life. Also, imagine this could be your neighbor using his garage as a front for selling and distributing illegal fireworks.

My second concern is that we cannot afford to weaken HB1987. We need a total ban on the sale and use of all fireworks. I know calling for a total ban on fireworks sales and use is not favored by the majority of the community but because of the enormous scale of this problem and illegal aerial fireworks usage; but to make our community safer; it is imperative that we need a total ban on fireworks coupled with a smart law enforcement plan. So if HB1987 is approved; my additional concern, who in government and law enforcement will take the lead and enforce this law. I personally believe the Honolulu Fire Department should be the lead in enforcement coupled with the Honolulu Police Department. The Community Neighborhood Security Watch Teams could provide tipping to HFD and HPD of problem areas along with new technology. Importantly, a plan of action would be needed for the successful enforcement of this law.

My last concern is that we need teeth into this new fireworks bill. We need stiffer fines, punishment and other penalties related to the level of the offense. I would recommend anyone prosecuted for bringing in explosives into this state and distributing material for sale, the court should give mandatory prison time including forfeiture of their personal property used in violation of the fireworks law.

In closing, earlier this month, I received a phone call from a 78 year old elderly lady who lives in a senior citizen home in Kaneohe. Earlier this month she read a fireworks article in the Honolulu Advertiser with comments from Representative Mark Takai and me. She personally found my phone number and reached out to me as she cried on the phone, *"Larry could you please help me; I am being terrorized by loud explosions right next to my home. I can't rest and I am woken at all hours. I have called the Police and they have done nothing to stop the explosions. Could you please help me and get my peace and quiet back again?"* My commitment to her on the phone was "Absolutely Yes." I will do what ever I can to help you and others while finding a way to stop those loud explosions in the future. Those were her words!

I ask you all today, please support and approve HB1987. Thank you for allowing me to address this forum today and I am available for any questions. Mahalo.