

**LATE**

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 11

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator David Y. Ige, Chair  
Senator Michelle Kidani, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 01, 2011 9:20 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Senator David Ige and Members of the Committee:

I would like to voice, through this email, my strong support for SB11, SD1, SSCR346, which creates a task force to plan for the establishment of a department of the sheriff to assume responsibilities and functions exercised by the sheriff division of the department of public safety.

I am a current member of the Sheriff Division and have been serving the citizens of the State of Hawaii for nine years. I believe the funding of this task force would ultimately prove to the legislature that the DEPARTMENT OF THE SHERIFF is necessary and desperately needed. Our current status as a Division within the Department of Public Safety (DPS) may seem logical but runs contrary to most, if not all, other states. There are cabinet level offices labeled Department of Public Safety in other states but their functions do not include the rehabilitation of criminals or "corrections." For the most part, Public Safety departments on the mainland do exactly that; keep the public safe through law enforcement. I believe the Corrections side of DPS does not want to lose their smaller, seemingly insignificant, Law Enforcement side because we provide critical funding that does not need to be approved by any other entity. When the Corrections Division runs a little light in their bank account, it has been a common practice to take the money from the Sheriff Division budget to balance their [Corrections] account. There is no outside entity overseeing or approving this transfer. A separate stand-alone Department is vital for the Sheriff to accomplish their mission unencumbered by the needs of the Corrections Division.

A task force to explore the creation of a Department of the Sheriff is imperative. I believe their final recommendations will closely resemble the results of the audit of the Sheriff Division completed by the State Auditor, Ms. Higa.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Deputy Sean Neilson

Sheriff Division