

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

ALII PLACE  
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 547-7400 • FAX: (808) 547-7515

KEITH M. KANESHIRO  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

ARMINA A. CHING  
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



**THE HONORABLE CLAYTON HEE, CHAIR**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND LABOR**  
**Twenty-Sixth State Legislature**  
**Regular Session of 2012**  
**State of Hawai`i**

January 31, 2012

**RE: S.B. 2060; RELATING TO ACCUSED TO TRANSPORT WITNESS OR WITNESSES.**

Chair Hee, Vice-Chair Shimabukuro, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Labor, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu submits the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 2060.

The purpose of Senate Bill 2060 is to add a new section to the Hawaii Revised Statutes, Chapter 571, which would expressly allow Hawaii's courts to order that a defendant transport a material witness(es) to court, in situations where the defendant resides with the witness(es), and the prosecution has made reasonably diligent--but unsuccessful--efforts to obtain the witness(es)' presence; or where the defendant has sole physical or legal custody of the witness(es).

In recent years, our office estimates that approximately ten (10) domestic violence cases per year have not proceeded to trial, simply because the court did not have express authority to order the defendant to transport a minor, elder, or incapacitated witness to court. The majority of these are child abuse cases, and approximately one-fourth are elder abuse cases. Although the Department has tried various measures to secure the presence of these witness via suboena, guardian ad litem, and other means, the process reaches a standstill in cases where the defendant is the sole guardian of the witness—meaning that the subpoena must be served via the defendant—or where the defendant and witness reside together.

Even if it is clear that a defendant has actual or effective control over a witness' ability to appear in court, the court has stated that it requires express statutory authority before it can order a defendant to transport a witness to court. There is currently no such provision in the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

Minors, elders and incapacitated persons represent some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community, and it is imperative that courts be empowered to hear these domestic violence cases in which minors, elders and incapacitated persons may have been victimized by their own relatives or caregivers.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County of Honolulu strongly supports Senate Bill 2060. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [JDLTestimony](#)  
**Cc:** [richard.minatoya@mauicounty.gov](mailto:richard.minatoya@mauicounty.gov)  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB2060 on 1/31/2012 9:10:00 AM  
**Date:** Monday, January 30, 2012 9:27:57 AM

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Testimony for JDL 1/31/2012 9:10:00 AM SB2060

Conference room: 016  
Testifier position: Support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Richard K. Minatoya  
Organization: Dept. of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui  
E-mail: [richard.minatoya@mauicounty.gov](mailto:richard.minatoya@mauicounty.gov)  
Submitted on: 1/30/2012

Comments:

The Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, County of Maui, supports the passage to SB 2060. The bill proposes to allow the family courts to require the accused to transport complaining witnesses to court. There are times, particularly in domestic violence cases, where the accused is the custodial parent of a juvenile witness or victim. This measure will require that the accused bring the witness/victim to court so that the witness/victim can testify.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit this testimony.