

Memo Opposing HB 1100

To: Representative Ryan Yamane
Head, Transportation Committee



From: Sean Starn
Owner, Hawaii Boot Removal

I am opposed to HB 1100. I am the owner of Hawaii Boot Removal, which is a DBA under Courtesy Valet Service. I have been in the parking business since 1990. I run valet parking, self pay parking lots, and do parking enforcement.

HB 1100 is being attached to the existing 29-11 Tow Statute. However, booting and towing vehicles are two totally different businesses requiring different or separate regulations.

The proposed bill on P. 6, line 16 states..."any person or entity excluding a tow company is capped to a \$25 boot removal fee. This statement seems unclear. Are tow companies allowed to charge more than a \$25 fee, yet non-tow companies are limited to a \$25 cap? The cost of each boot is very expensive, ranging from \$600 to \$900 per boot. Boots are frequently damaged, requiring repair and or replacement. Having a boot on the automobile is less hassle for the violator of a parking situation than having the automobile towed. The car is at the scene; once the boot removal fee is paid, the owner of the vehicle is on his/her way.

The present bill proposed does not specify any regulation on time from phone call to dispatcher requesting boot removal and the boot tech's removal of the boot. At Hawaii Boot Removal, the boot tech removes most boots within 5 minutes of call by the automobile owner. The longest time ever is 30 minutes due to travel time to destination.

Costs for running this type of business include:

- 24 hour dispatcher
- Boot techs
- Administration costs

P. 5, number 4 of HB 1100 talks about method of payment: "cash, credit card, or ATM located on premises." Credit cards are not taken by my business because violators frequently cancel payment after the boot has been removed. ATM on premise is not relevant because this is a mobile service. By making a violator travel to my office prior to boot removal, interferes with convenience of paying the fine and being released immediately on scene. Therefore, cash is the only realistic form of payment.

If the no seat belt law or talking on a cell phone fine were only \$25, no one would pay attention. If the fines are significant enough, violators pay attention. Boot fees in other states are as follows:

Houston, Tx: \$158.58
Salt Lake City, Ut: \$191
Yonkers, NY: \$75
Portland, Or: \$75
San Francisco, CA: \$300
Philadelphia, PA: \$150

Booting is a multi-million dollar revenue for states across America allowing them to retrieve past dues and fines. Putting a cap at \$25 would significantly hinder state tax revenues, placing Hawaii with the lowest booting fee in the nation.

It is easy to place a boot on a vehicle. The expertise of the business comes with ability to deal with violators in a professional, courteous manner, requiring employees with people skills.

In closing, I urge Senate and House to not advance this bill. It is not well thought out or practical.