

Honolulu, Hawaii
February 19, 2016

RE: H.B. No. 1662

Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Eighth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2016
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred H.B. No. 1662 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO WITNESSES,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to support and encourage victims and other witnesses to report and pursue charges relating to criminal offenses that occur in Hawaii by:

- (1) Increasing the per diem payments for out-of-state witnesses from \$145 to \$200 per 24-hour day; and
- (2) Increasing the overnight supplement for inter-island witnesses who are required to stay overnight from \$90 to \$145 per 24-hour day, in addition to the \$55 per diem payment.

The Honolulu Department of the Prosecuting Attorney, Hawaii Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, Kauai Office of the Prosecuting Attorney, and Maui Office of the Prosecuting Attorney testified in support of this measure.

Your Committee finds per diem stipends to witnesses who travel from out-of-state or interisland have increased by only a small amount in the most recent 27 years. This small increase has not kept pace with inflation. The current per diem amount is insufficient to cover the witnesses' personal expenses for lodging and food. Witnesses must use their own money to pay for these expenses. This has reduced witness participation and the pursuit



of charges against offenders, thus presenting an economic barrier to successful prosecution.

This measure alleviates the economic barrier at minimal cost. For example, based on the per diem amounts specified by this measure, Honolulu's Department of the Prosecuting Attorney's 2016 expenses would increase by only approximately \$12,500.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1662 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary,



KARL RHOADS, Chair



