

**TESTIMONY OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE, 2016**

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**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 2512, S.D. 1, H.D. 1, RELATING TO ANIMALS.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**DATE:** Friday, April 1, 2016

**TIME:** 11:00 a.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 308

**TESTIFIER(S):** Douglas S. Chin, Attorney General, or  
Landon M.M. Murata, Deputy Attorney General

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Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (“Department”) appreciates the intent of this bill and submits the following comments and proposed amendments.

The purpose of this bill is to increase the penalties for the offense of animal desertion in order to more adequately deter the conduct prohibited by section 143-2.6, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The bill essentially establishes two offenses under the general label “animal desertion”; one petty misdemeanor offense and one misdemeanor offense. In the bill, petty misdemeanor animal desertion does not represent any change from the current statute. Misdemeanor animal desertion occurs if, as a result of committing petty misdemeanor animal desertion, the animal suffers death or substantial bodily injury. The Department submits comments and proposed amendments addressing concerns with the clarity and enforceability of the bill.

Regarding the clarity of the bill, neither the bill nor the current statute is clear as to what is meant by the term “animal.” Chapter 143, HRS, does not define the term “animal” and it appears the term is only used in two places: (1) section 143-2.6 relating to animal desertion; and (2) section 143-2.5 relating to the authority of the counties to regulate animals other than dogs. The remaining sections of chapter 143 appear to regulate, address, or otherwise apply only to dogs. There are at least two other chapters in the HRS where the term “animal” is defined. In chapter 150A (Plant and Non-Domestic Animal Quarantine and Microorganism Import), HRS, “animal” is defined as “any invertebrate or vertebrate species of the animal kingdom including but not limited to mammal, bird, fish, reptile, mollusk, crustacean, insect, mite, and nematode,

other than common domestic animal such as dog and cat.” In chapter 711, HRS, the chapter where the animal cruelty statutes are located, “animal” is defined to include “every living creature, except a human being.” Both of these definitions appear to be broader and more inclusive than the drafters seem to intend given the first sentence in section 1 of the bill specifically mentions “primarily dogs and cats,” and the last sentence of that same paragraph uses the terms “pet” and “pet owner.”

With respect to the enforceability of the bill, the Department has two main areas of concern. First, there appears to be a disconnect between the wording in subsection (a), which remains unchanged from the current statute, and the amendments to subsection (b), which establish the misdemeanor animal desertion offense. Subsection (a) makes it unlawful for the owner or possessor on an animal to “leave the animal without the intention of returning to it.” The beginning of subsection (b) makes a violation of subsection (a) a petty misdemeanor. Subsection (b) goes on to establish that “provided that if, after the offense of animal desertion is committed, the animal suffers death or substantial bodily injury, the person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a penalty of \$2,000 in addition to any other penalties; provided further that each violation shall constitute a separate offense.” From an enforcement standpoint, the rewording of subsection (b) in the bill is cumbersome making the elements of the related misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor offenses difficult to discern.

For the purposes of clarity and enforceability, the Department recommends the following changes be made to the bill, consistent with the drafter’s intent to establish both a petty misdemeanor and misdemeanor offense of animal desertion:

First, the Department recommends the entire section on animal desertion be moved from chapter 143 to chapter 711. Chapter 711 already has definitions for the terms “animal,” “equine animal,” and “pet animal.” Additionally, the offense of animal desertion seems to have more in common with the animal cruelty sections of chapter 711 than with the other sections of chapter 143. If animal desertion is moved to chapter 711 then, consistent with the intent of the drafters expressed in section 1 of the bill, the term “animal” can be replaced with the term “pet animal” that is defined in chapter 711 as “a dog, cat, domesticated rabbit, guinea pig, domesticated pig, or caged birds (passeriformes, piciformes, and psittaciformes only) so long as not bred for consumption.”

Second, the Department recommends subsection (a) should be amended to read: “It shall be unlawful for the owner [~~of any animal~~] or [~~any~~] person in possession of [~~an~~] any pet animal [that belongs to another person to leave the animal without the intention of returning to it.] to desert the pet animal.” A definition for “desert” should then be inserted into section 711-1100 to mean: “to leave without intending to return.” Subsection (b) should be amended to read: “Any person who violates [~~this section~~] subsection (a) shall be guilty of a petty misdemeanor[-] and subject to a fine of not less than \$1,000 in addition to any other penalties.” A new subsection (c) should be inserted to read: “Any person who violates subsection (a) and recklessly causes the death or substantial bodily injury of the pet animal shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a fine of not less than \$2,000 in addition to any other penalties.” A new subsection (d) should be inserted to read: “Each pet animal deserted and each pet animal that suffers death or substantial bodily injury shall constitute a separate offense.”

Finally, to address situations where a pet animal may be legitimately released or surrendered, the Department recommends subsection (c), which would now be subsection (e), be amended as follows: “This section shall not apply to the release of a pet animal as part of a population management program or the surrender of a pet animal to any society or organization formed for the purpose of preventing cruelty to animals or promoting animal welfare.”

The Department recommends that the above matters be considered and that the suggested changes be made in order to better promote the intent of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR OF  
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

KEKOA KALUHIWA  
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
SUZANNE D. CASE  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE

Friday, April 1, 2016  
11:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 2512, SENATE DRAFT 1, HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO ANIMALS

Senate Bill 2512, Senate Draft 1, House Draft 1 proposes to increase penalties for animal desertion. House Draft 1 of this measure adds language that would exempt the release of animals into a “population management program,” an amendment that appears to exempt the practice of maintaining feral cat colonies through a process known as “Trap, Neuter, Release.” **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) opposes this measure.**

Hawaii’s native species evolved over millions of years in an environment devoid of human-introduced animals such as cats and dogs. The release of such animals when no longer wanted as pets, presents a clear threat to Hawaii’s native wildlife. Today, 28% of all threatened and endangered species in the United States are located in Hawaii, and 78% of all United States species extinctions have occurred in Hawaii. Discouraging the release of non-native animals into the environment is a necessary component of wildlife conservation in Hawaii.

The Department supported the initial draft of this measure, which would have simply increased penalties for animal abandonment, but notes that House Draft 1 amends the measure to exempt animals (referred to in SECTION 1 as being “primarily dogs and cats”) that are “released as part of a population management program.” The Department requests clarity on the term “population management program” in this context and notes that the term “population management” generally refers to wildlife, not domesticated animals such as dogs and cats. It is already illegal to release wildlife under Chapter 183D, Hawaii Revised Statutes. Similarly, domesticated animals such as cats and dogs should not be released. The Department believes that there should not be free-roaming or feral “populations” of domesticated animals, and that such animals should remain in the care of owners within their homes or on their private property.

In earlier hearings on this measure and its companion, House Bill 2245, the Humane Society of the United States suggested that this amendment be added to protect the practice of maintaining feral cat colonies known as “Trap, Neuter, Release” (TNR, also known as “Trap, Neuter, Release, and Manage”, or TNRM). The Department notes that the scientific consensus on TNR or TNRM is that it is not effective at reducing populations of feral cats, and instead promotes the presence of feral cat colonies. These colonies in turn present a risk of predation and disease transmission to Hawaii’s threatened and endangered wildlife, which are protected under federal and state laws.

The addition of this language into House Draft 1 undermines the original intent of this measure to decrease the likelihood of animal abandonment. Instead, the presence of feral cat colonies provides owners of unwanted pets with an expectation that someone else will care for their abandoned pet, increasing the likelihood of abandonment. The Department suggests that this practice should not be exempted from laws regarding animal desertion and that subsection (c) on page two, lines fifteen and sixteen of this measure be removed.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments.

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI  
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SCOTT E. ENRIGHT  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

April 1, 2016  
11:00 A.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

**SENATE BILL NO 2512 SD1 HD1  
RELATING TO ANIMALS**

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2512 SD1 HD1. The bill establishes penalties should a person be found guilty of deserting an animal in their possession and as a result of that desertion, the animal suffers death or substantial bodily injury. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports this bill.

Stronger penalties will deter animal abandonment and the potential impact of that action on the health of the animal and the cost to the community. In addition, the Department recommends that the language of the measure be amended to include "the injury and death of livestock caused by abandoned dogs." Abandonment of dogs can lead to feral pack formation that cause significant harm to livestock and wildlife.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





**Hawaiian Humane Society**  
People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waiialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826  
808.946.2187 • hawaiianhumane.org

April 1, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Luke, Chair  
The Honorable Scott Nishimoto, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Finance  
Hawaii State Capitol  
Conference Room 308  
425 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

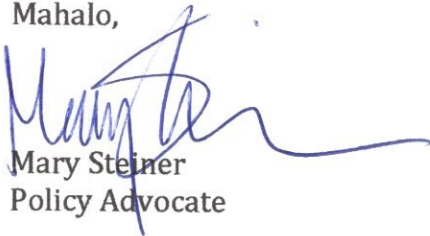
RE: SB 2512 SD1 HD1 Relating to Animals

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Nishimoto and Committee Members:

The Hawaiian Humane Society is pleased to offer this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2512 SD1 HD1, a bill that proposes to increase the penalties for animal abandonment.

No one knows the number of pets that are abandoned in Hawaii each year. What we do know is that it is cruel and inhumane. Increasing penalties and improving education are two ways to prevent animal abandonment and suffering. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo,



Mary Steiner  
Policy Advocate



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

**TO: Honorable Chair Luke and Vice-Chair Nishimoto and House Finance Committee Members**  
**April 1, 2016 11am**

**FROM: Inga Gibson, Hawaii Senior State Director, The Humane Society of the United States, [igibson@humanesociety.org](mailto:igibson@humanesociety.org), 808.354.3211**

**RE: SUPPORT SB2512; Relating to animals, pet abandonment**

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States members and supporters across Hawaii we urge your support of SB2512, which would increase the penalties for the intentional abandonment of a pet animal. *Please note that there is no fiscal request or general appropriation in this bill as this measure simply increases penalties under existing statute, and is enforced by local humane societies.*

Pets depend on people for care and compassion. Abandoned pets can become the victim of starvation, disease, injury, death or cruelty. Abandoned pets who are unsterilized may also reproduce and contribute to pet overpopulation, which increases the financial burden on animal care and control agencies and taxpayers. Abandoned pets, such as hunting dogs, have been known to harm native wildlife. Further, in looking at abandonment laws across the nation, Hawaii's law is one of the weakest in the nation, only a petty misdemeanor with a fine of \$50. Other states classify abandonment as a misdemeanor or even a felony.

The purpose of this measure is to encourage pet owners who must find a home for their pet to work with local shelters and rescue groups on rehoming options, and not to simply abandon or desert their pets. Pets are family members and there are resources to help keep pets in their home and strengthen the human-animal bond.

Below is a recent article from the Star-Advertiser on this important measure.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

<http://www.staradvertiser.com/hawaii-news/penalties-for-animal-dumping-might-rise/>

## **Penalties for animal dumping might rise**

By Michael Lasquero [mlasquero@staradvertiser.com](mailto:mlasquero@staradvertiser.com)

Posted March 25, 2016

The fine for abandoning an animal in Hawaii would increase under bills advancing on both sides of the Legislature.

Currently, anyone caught discarding an animal can be charged with a petty misdemeanor with a penalty of \$50. Senate Bill 2512 and House Bill 2245 would raise that fine to \$1,000. The punishment could also rise to \$2,000 if the deserted animal dies or suffers substantial bodily injury.



Supporters of the two measures are hoping that the increased fine will prevent the suffering of animals that depend on humans for survival.

“We have one of the weakest penalties in the nation right now,” said Inga Gibson, Hawaii state director of the Humane Society of the United States. “In most states it’s a misdemeanor, and in a few states it’s actually a felony. We need to send a message that pets depend on people for care and compassion, and abandoning them is cruel and illegal.”

Gibson added that the penalty would also apply to those who take other people’s pets and leave them to fend for themselves.

“There have been a number of cases where somebody doesn’t like their neighbor’s cat or dog — so they’re trapping or taking them and dumping them elsewhere to be somebody else’s problem.”

“We really want to use this as an educational tool to help people know if you can’t keep your animal, (or) if you’re having problems with your neighbor’s animal, there are organizations that want to help address those problems,” Gibson said. “That’s the intent of this measure. It’s not to prosecute people. It’s to send a message that this isn’t pono.”

Alicia Maluafiti, president of Poi Dogs & Popoki, cited an instance in written testimony in which a woman dumped her puppy on a busy road and tied the mother dog to a fence. Through surveillance cameras and social media, the group was able to find the woman and have her receive a citation from Hawaiian Humane Society.

“We are supporting the prosecution of this woman to deter other people from dumping animals, but we need greater penalties as well,” said Maluafiti.

Animals that are abandoned can also be a threat to the environment, native animals and ecosystem. Supporters say pets that are not sterilized will reproduce and contribute to feral populations in the state.

Scott Enright, chairman of the state Board of Agriculture, added in written testimony that the abandonment of dogs can lead to feral pack formations that can cause significant harm to livestock and wildlife.

Earlier in the year, state lawmakers introduced a bill that would prohibit individuals from feeding and caring for these animals, but received opposition because it would prevent those who help stabilize feral cat populations through trap-neuter-return programs, and eventually deferred the measure.

**On the other hand, SB 2512 and HB 2245 garnered much testimony in support and had no opposition in the five combined hearings before various committees. In addition to the support of local humane societies, organizations such as the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, the Conservation Council for Hawaii and, more recently, the state attorney general’s office, have submitted testimony in favor of the bills.**

“I think it’s a common-sense measure,” said Gibson. “I don’t think anybody supports abandoning an animal. Pets are family. There’s no question that they depend on us. It’s very modest because we’re just raising the penalties.”

SB 2512 was approved by the House Judiciary Committee on March 18 and is awaiting a hearing in the House Finance Committee. Its counterpart, HB 2245, was advanced by the Senate Judiciary and Labor Committee on Monday morning and will move on to the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 12:33 PM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** AKOE002@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB2512 on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM\*

**SB2512**

Submitted on: 3/30/2016

Testimony for FIN on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Eric Ako DVM	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 3:13 PM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** sawonglaw@hawaii.rr.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SB2512 on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM

**SB2512**

Submitted on: 3/30/2016

Testimony for FIN on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Sandie Wong	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I am strong support of SB2512. If anything, I would recommend that the fines be higher. Thank you.

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 5:17 PM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** mendezj@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB2512 on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM\*

**SB2512**

Submitted on: 3/30/2016

Testimony for FIN on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 30, 2016 6:25 PM  
**To:** FINTestimony  
**Cc:** crr@hawaiiantel.net  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for SB2512 on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM\*

**SB2512**

Submitted on: 3/30/2016

Testimony for FIN on Apr 1, 2016 11:00AM in Conference Room 308

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
carole richelieu	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**LATE**

*From:* Michelle Pillen <michelle@hawaiiantel.net>  
*Sent:* Thursday, March 31, 2016 5:18 PM  
*To:* FINTestimony  
*Subject:* 4-1-16 11am SB2512 Support

To make people accountable for dumping their cats, please support SB2512.

Michelle Pillen  
151 Kaiolena Drive  
Kailua, HI 96734  
michelle@hawaiiantel.net  
808.542.5472

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From: Christin Matsushige <hawaiicatfoundation@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2016 5:21 PM  
To: FINTestimony  
Subject: 4-1-16 11am SB2512 Support



Re: SB2512 - SUPPORT

Dear Legislators,

As president of HAWAII CAT FOUNDATION, a 501(c)(3) non profit cat rescue organization since 1995, our many supporters encourage you to support SB2512.

Animal/pet abandonment is, unfortunately, very common in the islands. There are many poor excuses that people give for abandoning their pets to fend for themselves. Divorce, moving, allergies, not having 'time' to care for pets, are some of the excuses people give for 'getting rid of' pets by abandoning them.

Abandonment is animal cruelty and results in the starvation and or deaths of countless pets each year.

People guilty of such action need to be held more accountable through enactment of stricter laws.

Thank you for your support of SB2513.

Aloha,  
Christin Matsushige, President  
HAWAII CAT FOUNDATION





**LATE**

*improving the quality of lives of pets and their people.*

Testimony by Alicia Maluafiti, President, Poi Dogs & Popoki  
In strong support of SB 2512 Relating to Animals  
House Committee on Finance  
Friday, April 1, 11 am, Room 308

Aloha Chair Luke and members of the committee,

My name is Alicia Maluafiti, President of Poi Dogs & Popoki (PDP), and I am testifying in strong support of SB 2512 which increases penalties for animal abandonment. I have been involved in animal rescue for almost 20 years, was a Director at Hawaiian Humane Society, and a founder and president of Oahu Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals before I started PDP.



#### **Proposed Amendment: Increase the Penalty**

The Honolulu City Council is currently considering a bill to increase the fine for illegal dumping of trash from \$250 to \$2,500. Ghandi said “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.” How can we justify fining people MORE for dumping trash than for dumping animals? I would ask the committee to increase the fine from \$1,000 to \$2,500 so that we are at least valuing the life of an animal as much as we value a clean street.

#### **Why We Need This Bill**

For those of us doing rescue, animal abandonment is a regular part of our lives. On an evening in Ewa Beach when we were trapping cats at a local beach part to be sterilized as part of Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), a truck pulled up and the driver got out with a basket and dumped a cat into the parking lot. The cat had a collar but no microchip. We confronted the man and he admitted it was his neighbor’s cat. Two years ago, I got a call that 2 mastiff-mix dogs were sitting on the side of the road in Barber’s Point – at the same spot every day. They had been there for 3 months and people were feeding them. Typical of dumped dogs – they were waiting for their owner to return. Lucy and Linus now weigh over 100 pounds each and are still with me. Just recently, we picked up a very emaciated pit bull at the golf course. Although microchipped, his owners’ contact information was not current. Ozzie is currently living with me and recovering from his ordeal. And just a month ago, we rescued 10 puppies dumped in a box on the side of the road.



In January, a woman dumped a mommy dog and her puppy on Paakea Rd. in Nanakuli – tying the mommy to the fence but allowing the puppy to roam on a busy road where many animals are often hit. The owner of the property (a PDP board member) had surveillance cameras and was able to get the make of the car and license plate number. Within hours after posting photos of the car and the dogs all over social media, we had the name and address of the owner of the car and found out she DID own these dogs and DID dump them in Nanakuli. Hawaiian Humane Society was called and the woman was cited. We are supporting the prosecution of this woman to deter other people from dumping animals but we need greater penalties as well along with a mandate for microchip identification to track down irresponsible owners.

PDP ends up covering the health care expenses of all these animals that we rescue which has a financial impact on our LLC. While the toll on their lives has been an emotional one, we will continue to care for them because the alternative is likely euthanasia. And while some may be sick or face serious health challenges, we believe they deserve better. At a minimum – they deserve shelter from the elements, fresh water and food, and a little TLC after struggling to survive.

Please help us hold these people accountable for their lack of compassion and caring. Mahalo for your consideration.

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From: Alexis Jamison <jamisona@hawaii.edu>  
Sent: Thursday, March 31, 2016 5:54 PM  
To: FINTestimony  
Subject: 4-1-16 11am SB2512 Support

**LATE**

Please support this bill. It is imperative to deter the rampant dumping of animals that occurs in this state. The animal abandonment in this state is putting an undue burden on the public and is increasing the already terrible pet overpopulation problem we face. While fines and punishments for animal abandonment will never completely stop the problem, it will hopefully reduce it dramatically.

In addition to these laws, there needs to be a way to enforce them. I highly suggest video surveillance in high-dump areas, signage about the laws, and reducing or eliminating the surrender fees at the Hawaiian Humane Society.

Thank you for your time.

**LATE**

TESTIMONY FOR SB2512 SD1

03-01-16 1:30PM

February 19th, 2016

To: Senator Jill N. Tokuda, Chair  
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair  
Members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Damian Alonso

Subject: Support of SB2512 SD1

Aloha! My name is Damian Alonso and I am currently a sophomore at Kalaheo High School on Oahu. I support SB2512 SD1, to increase penalties and establish a fine for animal desertion, and would like to request a hearing for the stated bill. As of right now, anybody who abandons an animal is guilty of a misdemeanor, but in order to lessen the amount of animal desertion in Hawaii, the penalties for it must be raised.

Deserting animals is not only terrible, morally, but also terrible for the animals and the state of Hawaii. Abandoned animals are most likely to suffer from starvation, disease, and/or injury. I strongly believe this bill, because the weak penalty right now has not stopped animal desertion and having a stronger penalty with a fine would deter animal desertion.

Deserting animals can also lead to loss of control, and loss of control can lead to over population of the animal. Over population would make animal shelters packed, and possibly harm the native Hawaiian wildlife as animals brought to Hawaii do not fit in with the Hawaiian ecosystem. Increasing the penalties and establishing a fine for deserting animals can lessen the chance of over population of animals in Hawaii.

Passing this bill would lower the amount of animals abandoned each year and make sure that all animals are taken care of properly and do not harm Hawaii. This is why I support this bill and I hope that you may consider my request for a hearing.