



HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM
A S S O C I A T I O N

Testimony of

Mufi Hannemann
President & CEO
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

Senate Committee on Human Services

Senate Bill 2413: Relating to Long Distance Running Events

Chair Green and members of the Committee on Human Services, mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony on behalf of the nearly 700 members of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association, the state's largest private sector visitor industry organization.

The HLTA respectfully opposes SB 2413 which seeks to prohibit long distance running event organizers from allowing minors to register in such activities. It calls for raising the age of participants to eighteen years or older on the scheduled date of the running event.

As a tourism association, we feel that the right to participate in events such as the Honolulu Marathon, or half marathons should be left to the decision of the young athlete and their parents and/or their legal guardians. It is too intrusive and highly unnecessary for government to mandate that a young athlete be precluded from running in these events, especially when there is no evidence to suggest that their life may be endangered by participating in these types of activities. For instance, according to respected professionals, such as Dr. William Roberts, medical advisor for the Twin Cities marathon, who has conducted studies on long distance running impact on children, he concluded in his study in 2007 that there is no scientific evidence that shows that the physical and mental health of our youth would be jeopardized by racing in marathons. Founder and CEO of the Honolulu Marathon, Dr. James Barahal strongly agrees with these findings as they have had not encountered any life-threatening issues with keiki as young as seven, who have run in their events.

The Honolulu Marathon, established 45 years ago, is one of the State's largest annual events which brings in tens of thousands of visitors into Oahu from all over the world who spend millions of dollars. According to reports, the Honolulu Marathon had 32,340 participants this past year with approximately 14,500 of those athletes coming from Japan and 4,500 from the mainland and other countries. We believe we should leave well enough alone and allow the Honolulu Marathon to operate as it has done in the past so that it can continue to be a premier internationally recognized sporting event for our state.

For these reasons we oppose SB2413.

Mahalo.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 3:45:41 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jonathan Lyau		Oppose	No

Comments:

I am Jonathan Lyau and am a long time Kamaaina runner in Hawaii. I am in the Honolulu Marathon Hall of Fame and also have coached and trained young runners from pre-teens to high schoolers for over 15 years. I currently coach at Iolani School(8 years) and previously was at Kamehameha School(10 years). I am as the director and founder of the Aloha Cross Country Camp for 7-12 graders.

I began my running as a 15 year old in 1979 and that same year ran my first Honolulu Marathon along with many other of my teammates. I have continued to do so for the next 5 decades. I still run to this day.

Back in the 1980's, Before the proliferation of year round team organized sports, there where many families running long distances in Hawaii. Many of them still run today. We are healthy, and have grown normally and also physically fit and not obese.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 4:19:06 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kathleen Lee		Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha members of the Senate Committee on Human Services -

please oppose or defer SB2413 at this time. Race administrators should not have the onus of policing who signs up to run, nor should people under the age of 18 not be allowed to practice safe and healthy activities like running. If we all resigned to the argument of children being hurt through long runs, then we as a community risk going down the slippery slope of discouraging any physical activity that mentally and physically trains individuals with great values and lessons like resilience and focus - should we also start opposing football, soccer, baseball, martial arts, gymnastics, etc. because of the fear of risking injury on our kids (and ultimately robbing them of the experience of competition and sportsmanship)? Running is a safe activity, and when people train properly for long-distance races, finishing them imparts a great sense of satisfaction, of reaching a hard-earned goal. I recently started off the year with a 5K run with my five-year-old nephew and seven-year-old niece, both who impressively finished the race before I did. I can only imagine how far they'll go as they get older, without having to be restricted to what races they can and can't sign up for. During long runs like half-marathons and full marathons, every participant has the option to stop AT ANY TIME. Not only that, but first-aid and water stations are available throughout races, supporting all participants.

Again, I urge you to OPPOSE AND/DEFER SB2413 at this time.

Mahalo,

Kathleen Lee

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 5:32:24 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ian Tsang		Oppose	Yes

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ian Tsang, and I have been an avid runner, educator, and reporter on the topic for the past 4 years. From a very young age, I faced many injuries and was born with little to no athletic talent whatsoever. I underwent 5 overall major surgeries - 3 on my right year which resulted in me still being "half deaf," and not having as easy of a time running in straight lines as others. I also had one major surgery on each of my feet, as I had flat feet, weak ankles, and joints which were prone to injury.

Due to this, I spent two years on crutches but decided to take up the sport of running when I regained my ability to walk. After that, my love for the sport grew, and I spent the past 3 years training with elite professionals, college, and high school athletes. I founded "The Hawaii Project," with the intention of properly educating Hawaii's coaches, parents, and youth in proper training techniques - as Hawaii's isolation has resulted in slower times being run. Furthermore, the goal of The Hawaii Project was to advance the state of the sport and teach about health, wellness, and hard work.

Soon after, I began to write for DyeStat, and RunnerSpace, two of - if not - the most read running related websites in the country. They were able to give me the platform in order to broadcast Hawaii's high school track & cross country programs to the rest of the country. Thus, advancing the sport in Hawaii by getting our image out to the world.

Now into my second year with these websites, we have done much to properly educate students on healthy training, and we have come to the conclusion that this bill is not in the best interest of the sport. With proper training suited to the individual - regardless of age - training for a half marathon is possible. While the average sub 18-year-old is not gearing their interests towards running, there are a select few who do. The opportunity to pursue their passions should be up to them, and their parents, as some children are more than capable of accomplishing the feat.

I truly believe that my story exemplifies how running long distances does not really impact the body in the way claimed in the bill. My body has been broken many times before, it is still quite weak in the joints, and will always be. However, I am still able to run long distances. This sport teaches about dedication and perseverance. Yes,

sometimes it may hurt to run far, but it expands the mental capacity of the runner and allows you to test your limits.

In conclusion, maybe every individual under the age of 18 is not capable of running a half, or full marathon. However, for those who are, I believe that they should have the option of doing so.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/4/2018 10:57:23 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Charlene Mersburgh		Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose SB2413. A youth should be allowed to run in long distance events as it is a health and positive activity to engage in.

Thank you,

Charlene Mersburgh

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 12:06:31 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
William J De Lude	Hawaiian Citizen	Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Committee Chair and Members, Mahalo for allowing me to submit my testimony in Opposition to SB2413. I'm in agreement with many of the Testimonies in opposition to this bill. I find it hard to see why you would be introducing this bill in the first place. There have been many studies done on this subject and none have been conclusive either way. The danger of children under the age of 18 running in Long Distance Races have not been proven to be detrimental to their health and well being. I believe that this Committee and its Members need to send it back to the original Introducer Senator ESPERO, Wakai so it can be placed in the Trash pile.

Mahalo again, William J De Lude, Hawaiian Citizen

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 7:57:56 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeremy Riddle		Oppose	No

Comments:

I oppose Bill SB2413. As a father of two growing athletes F-8 and F-10, coach of an elementary school track team, triathlete, and marathoner I believe that this bill would kill the hopes and dreams of young athletes statewide.

Currently my girls have competed in races ranging from 50m dashes to 10k runs and to include sprint distance triathlons. Their dream is to run a marathon and they have been training to make this happen in 2019 with their first half-marathon in 2018. With proper training and determination anything is possible. So by telling these kids they are not even allowed to try we are turning our backs and literally pushing them away.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 8:20:19 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Dr. John Campagna	Tripler Army Medical Center	Oppose	No

Comments:

To the Committee,

As an Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine Physician I strongly oppose SB2413. The information provided in the *Journal of Athletic Training* is a one sided argument with many other articles supporting activity including long distance running in adolescents. Though it is true that running can cause injuries, so can all sports and is not a reason to ban them. There are many important arguments to support opposition to SB2413.

The most important reason to oppose this bill is that the largest medical problem in our state and our nation is obesity. We should not be placing any obstacles in the way for our children and adolescents to participate in physical activity, especially running. The risk of the conditions listed in the bill proposal are reversible and not even established as caused by long distance running as opposed to other sports or activities. The risk of obesity is real and costs the state tremendous resources.

Adolescents are already allowed to do long distance running in the form of track, cross country, soccer, and basketball. There is no proposal to ban these events as everyone recognizes the value of healthy activity. These sports pose the same risks for overuse injuries as sponsored long distance running events. Other sports have a much higher health risk, football, surfing, and cheerleading to name a few. Running overuse injuries get better when a person stops running. Traumatic Brain Injury from head trauma does not, yet we still allow youth to box and play rugby.

As an adolescent and young adult physician, the age of 18 as a cut off makes no biological sense. The human body, especially in females, matures to adult status well before then. That is why high school and collegiate athletes have roughly the same level of overuse injury. It is rare for myself, other physicians who take care of athletes, physical therapists, or athletic trainers to take care of overuse injuries from too much running.

It is the best interest of the children and adolescents in the state of Hawaii to participate in whatever physical activity they want to. The state should allow young persons to run

and compete in long distance events. It is a healthier option than the alternative and the risks are minimal, reversible, and less than other sports options.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 10:43:01 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Danette Aquino		Oppose	No

Comments:

My name is Danette Aquino and I am a parent of a student athlete. I oppose this measure because it is a prime example of government over reach. Parents can make decisions for their children with the guidance of health care professionals. The state government does not have to spend time or tax payer money trying to decide these for families. There are more important issues that the state government need to be concerned with. Healthy children, Healthy families and Healthy Hawai`i.

Thank you for your consideration.

Danette Aquino

8082037354

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 10:55:43 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Natalie		Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha Representatives, Please **vote "no"** on SB2413. We desperately need to make more opportunities for physical activity available for our kids, not less.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 11:10:57 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jason Hynd		Oppose	No

Comments:

As a father of four active children, and a lifelong athlete myself, I am astounded that State government would seek to discourage athletic pursuit, and take away the authority of parents to make safe choices for their keiki!

Although it is certainly possible to push our bodies too far, the vast majority of children who run endurance events train enough to safely complete their chosen event, and do so at an effort level that is appropriate for their fitness. An example would be a highly trained 17yo highschool cross-country runner completing Hapalua 1/2 marathon in 1hr15min, near the front of the pack, and well within his fitness capabilities. Another example might be a 13yo who lives an active life, but isn't competitive. He or she may safely choose to walk/jog the Honolulu marathon, finishing back-of-the-pack in six hours, but suffering no ill consequences due to the low effort level and lack of impact inherent in walking or very slow jogging.

Although we are all concerned when children are put at risk, the examples of children harmed by exercise are very rare indeed, and mostly anecdotal. Actual medically documented cases are almost impossible to find.

If we are going to legislate for every case where parents might be endangering the welfare of their children, then we have to look at the number of parents who are seriously and permanently damaging their keiki by feeding them junk. Type 2 diabetes in children used to be extremely rare, now it's a common reality. Obese children can be seen on school grounds as early as elementary grades. Should we introduce legislation that prohibits the purchase or consumption of sweet drinks or foods? Certainly unhealthy diets learned at a young age damage our keiki, and they grow up to a life of early disease and disability! Many children and adults are hurt playing other sports such as football. Injuries that can and do cause lifelong disabilities including serious brain injury. Should we introduce legislation to ban most school sports? Is surfing always safe? Riding a bike?

Obviously any activity done without proper preparation or controls can be harmful. That is a decision best left to the parents!

Respectfully,

Jason Hynd

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 11:20:57 AM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Malia Nanbara		Oppose	No

Comments:

As a cross country coach and a previous high school and college runner, I recognize the many benefits that running provides to youths. The age in which a child is capable of running distances of 13-26 miles should be a conversation between the child, its parent, and possibly their running coach and not something determined by the government. Long runs, which can be as long as 13 miles for children racing the high school race distance of 5k (3.1 miles), have long been a part of training. The child, if prepared, should have an opportunity to challenge themselves to participate in these races. Ultimately the child's participation in these races already relies on permission from their parents/guardians, and it should continue to be their decision.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 1:50:27 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sean Carroll		Oppose	No

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

Please reconsider moving forward with this proposal. Obesity is a much greater problem and having kids participating in activities such as running can help reduce and prevent obesity. There does not appear to be enough evidence in the article to ban running activities.

Sincerely,

Sean Carroll

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 2:19:48 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Grace		Oppose	No

Comments:

This is ridiculous. With childhood obesity rates we should be encouraging exercise and athleticism. This discourages youth from becoming competitive in the sport. Additionally, nothing stops someone from running long distances on their own.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 3:13:31 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
JONATHAN LOTT		Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha Senator Espero and members of the committee. My name is Jonathan Lott, and I can still run long races at age 62. I believe this is a way to start a discussion and by introducing this bill, you are just as you said, beginning the process of vetting the bill. I am mostly in agreement with Coach Michael Georgi who has submitted testimony in support, having coached against his athletes in the past. I was not pushed by my parents to run long distance races at a young age, but did so (20 miles at age 17, first marathon at age 19) out of ignorance, as this was at the beginning of the running boom. I too was inspired by Frank Shorter and Bill Rogers and wanted to be an Olympic Marathoner. I believe now that a runner should wait until their chance to compete in Track (primarily) and Cross Country (XC) at high school and college level are over before they tackle a Marathon competitively like I did. Half marathon or Great Aloha run can be OK with a lot of preparation for kids who have been "off the couch" for years already (or played soccer for years) and who don't mind messing up their Track season in the spring. I would suggest that if they insist on participating, with parental consent, they do long races for **fun** and **completion** only--as in a group with team mates or alongside parents--not to try to place high and go all out like I did. I placed very high in the aforementioned races and I believe, ruined my "speed" for at least the rest of my college career. In fact I competed as hard as I could at most of the many marathons I ran subsequently and never placed as high as in my first (2nd overall) and my track speed was lackluster thereafter. As a coach I discouraged my athletes from doing the long road races for these reasons--wait until the body is fully developed and opportunities to run track in high school and college are over. I appreciate Matt Stevens comments, but wonder if he did all-out marathons in his younger years when he was an awesome competitor in XC and Track. So I think this bill needs to start the discussion and is probably unnecessary, just want to offer my personal experience as a competitor and coach to caution against young athletes without extensive preparation going too hard (trying to place high or win awards) in long road races. Not so much because of injury or trauma during the event, but in view of the effect on track and XC careers that could gain notice and scholarship opportunities. I don't think doing well at marathons is going to help much, if at all, in gaining college scholarship. If I were a college coach, I would consider it a negative or at least a red flag. I saw too many peers whose parents pushed or just allowed them to push themselves "burn out" and quit running rather than continue it as a lifetime sport like Coach Georgi has done. Do the 5K and maybe 8K races, then run XC and Track in high school and (if possible) in college first. In coaching, we wanted to see the athletes do well in middle distance (400m to 1500m)

before "moving up" while retaining their "speed" for success when more developed physically. Today's kids need to love running for fun, and surely they come into high school level less prepared than my baby boomer generation did, especially those of us who grew up essentially as free range kids who spent our youth outside and physically active. I don't want to discourage them from getting into the sport and develop a lifelong love of the feeling of being in shape. As I put it, would you rather drive a Ferrari, (in shape body) or drive a beat-up economy car (out of shape/overweight body)? I am a fan of the HURT racers but want those who feel the same to be able to love distance running enough to be capable to do that kind of event later in life like I have (most recently, XTERRA long course at Kualoa Ranch). My knees are still good and yet, I don't try to be competitive unless I've done the proper training--long hours of commitment!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for starting the discussion.

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 5:22:17 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lisa Dau		Oppose	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Lisa Dau and I represent Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition, and we oppose SB2413. Our mission for KIPC and it's members is to promote safety and prevent injuries, which includes sports related injuries. This bill takes away the ability for kids who enjoy running and want to compete. Any sport, football, cheerleading, running, has it's risks. With responsible coaching, proper care and training, children and youth could excel in sports that brings them joy and sense of accomplishment. Banning children and youth from participating in any distance running programs, competitions, marathons, etc will send the wrong message for health, wellness and injury prevention. It's the wrong message to tell kids in order to prevent injuries you must stay away from that sport. The message should be clear: to prevent sports related injuries you must practice, practice wisely, following coaching guidelines, rest, and know your limitations. Banning children and youth on a sport like long distance running is not the appropriate way to prevent sports related injuries.

Thank you,

Lisa Dau, RN
Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition

SB-2413

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 4:20:03 PM

Testimony for HMS on 2/5/2018 3:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bruce Ong		Oppose	No

Comments:

Dear Senator Espero,

I am writing in response to the upcoming proposal that would limit children and adolescents younger than 18 years from participating in long distance running events. I am a practicing physician in the State of Hawaii and I am double board certified by the American Academy of Pediatrics in both General Pediatrics and Pediatric Pulmonology. Additionally, I hold a position as Clinical Assistant Professor of Pediatrics, University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine, and am the Deputy Chief of Pediatrics for the pediatric residency program at Tripler Army Medical Center, which trains 24 pediatric residents yearly. Prior to becoming a physician, I was also involved in developing state-level health policy.

While I do recognize the concerns that parents may have in allowing children to participate in these types of events, at this time I do not believe that any objective evidence exists to suggest that this activity is harmful, and I believe that either more time should be taken to do a thorough, independent investigation of supporting or refuting data, or the bill submission should be retracted completely.

As a pediatrician, factually, I can say the following:

1. There is no definitive, research-based clinical evidence that links long term joint injury in children with long distance running events.
2. The American Academy of Pediatrics has not put out any specific guidance regarding risk to children or limitations to this population in terms of running events at distances longer than 13.1 miles
3. There is growing evidence that suggests osteoarthritis is in part an inherited disease, and thus may influence the onset of joint injury. Genetics are now estimated to account for almost fifty percent of the risk of an individual acquiring this disorder (The Lancet, Vol 380, No. 9844, p 815-23, September 2012).

In the context of children in general, it has been firmly established that there has been an ongoing epidemic of childhood obesity that is not improving over time. While a nutrition component contributes to this problem, the increasing sedentary lifestyle and inability to adopt health habits such as cardiovascular activity has also been frequently cited as an additional contributor.

As a scientist and a pediatrician, I practice medicine founded upon evidence-based recommendations. To my knowledge, this evidence does not exist for long distance running and children. In the same context, we know that influenza has a significant morbidity rate, and costs the health care insurers millions of dollars each year, yet we do not pass laws requiring influenza vaccinations. This is based on fact and reproducible research-based studies.

I believe that your constituents pursuing this bill have the right intentions, but I cannot support emotionally-driven laws without definitive evidence, and I hope you would feel the same way. While it may seem that the only thing at stake here is a few children running long distance running events, the true unintended result is that we may ultimately discourage from children safely participating in healthy habits that could serve them for the rest of their lives.

Please consider either not pushing this bill forward or at least take further time to investigate the risks and benefits of this proposal. At the very least, the decision to allow children to participate in these events should be based on parents having a visit with their child's pediatrician and have that physician provide information about risks and benefits so that good informed decisions can be made for the greatest benefit for the child.

Very Respectfully,

Bruce A. Ong, MD, MPH